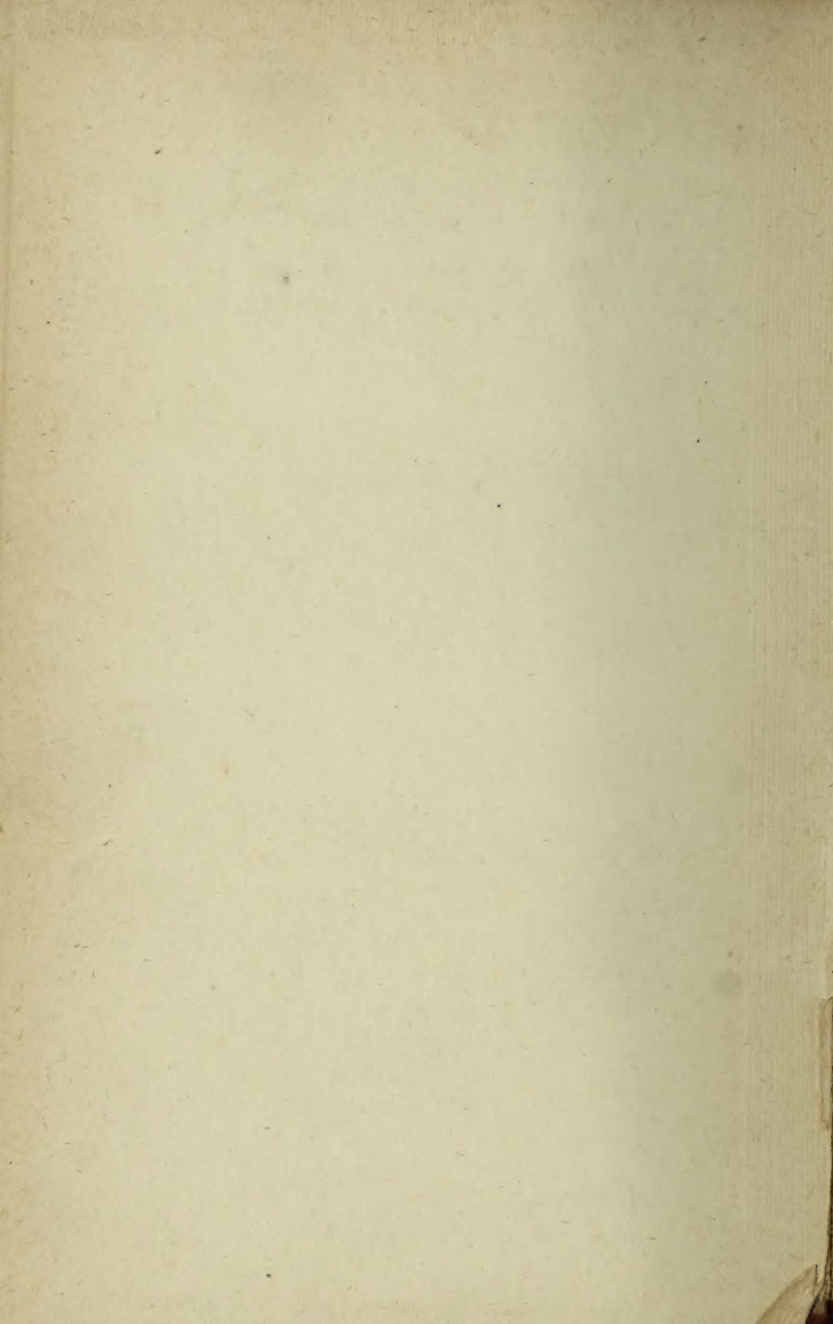


A · MANUAL ❧
❧ FOR · LENT

BY W. J. KNOX LITTLE M.A.



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Wm Osborn Baker

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A Manual for Lent

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A Manual of Devotion for Lent

By W. J. KNOX LITTLE M.A.

Canon Residentiary of Worcester
and Vicar of Hoar Cross

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1901

I dedicate

THIS VOLUME TO MY SON

WALTER,

IN MEMORY OF A TIME

SADDENED

BY THE SHADOWS OF APPROACHING SEPARATION,

GLADDENED

BY BEING MUCH TOGETHER.

Preface.

THE following Manual is meant as an assistance to those who desire — perhaps in busy lives — to observe Lent. It is the outcome of practical experience, and is intended to suggest simple and solemn thoughts on some points of the spiritual life.

In the very few instances in which the words of others have been employed in the Prayers or Verses — (which are meant to gather up the results of the thoughts suggested) — these have been placed within inverted commas.

It is hoped that what has been of use to some may be found useful to a larger number. In a time full of hurry and distraction like the time we live in, it is often not easy to keep Lent well. A few simple thoughts and prayers, morning and evening, may not be useless as a help to some who have not much time for devotion at their command.

W. J. KNOX LITTLE.

Ash Wednesday.

Morning.

The Fact of Sin.

TEXT.—“*The Mystery of Iniquity doth already work.*”

—2 THESS. ii. 7.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

LENT is a time for serious thoughts. It is more. The Church calls us now to make an effort; to come apart, as much as may be, from the ordinary occupation and pleasure of life, and to think of inner things. We are to think of ourselves, but not in mere morbid introspection—quite the reverse. Our thoughts must be calm, quiet, steady, practical. What are we really? If the din of life is hushed, and we come apart and stand alone with God, what does He see us to be? Life takes our attention from ourselves,

from our own souls. That in many ways is right. We ought not to be always thinking of ourselves. There is a time for everything. Now is the time to "take stock" of spiritual things.

To do this, we should remember these things : (1), we must do it in dependence upon God and constantly looking to Him ; (2) we must do this calmly and earnestly, listening for God's teaching and trying, by His help, to see things as they are ; (3) we must have before us a practical intention and determination to turn our thoughts into acts by amending what is wrong.

To-day the chief fact before us is Sin.

Sin, as the Apostle tells us, is a *Mystery*.

The world is full of mystery ; that is, not of imaginations or fancies, but of facts, known, yet not fully known. The natural world, and our own bodies and lives are mysteries. We cannot doubt the facts : we cannot fully understand them. So it is with Sin. That there is "something in this world amiss," and in ourselves too, we all know. How did it come ? Who knows ? The "Origin of Evil" in the world of a good God has puzzled thinkers at all times. Holy Scripture falls in with our own innate conviction that it was not always so ; that in some way this taint has passed from the Angelic Nature to Human Nature. We don't know how ; we don't know why ; but there it is. It is a deep mystery. It hangs over the whole world as "a Death Veil." In the soul it is perverted desire and a tainted will. In mankind at large it spreads everywhere, like a disease.

Sin is *active*. "The Mystery of Iniquity doth

already *work*." It is not a mere failure to do right. It is not a mere mistake. It is not merely ignorance or incapacity, or a falling short of the highest and noblest things. It is a mysterious something which has to be fought against. It affects all human wills. Holy Scripture teaches us, and experience proves to us, that it has much of its activity from the impetus of a malignant living will. Connected with it is the Evil One. We know it is not our normal condition. We feel that we are made for higher things. We are capable of looking in admiration to a higher ideal. Yet there it is, darkening the world, darkening life—a creeping, penetrating, terribly active mystery.

Meditation.

O MY GOD, Thou art my Maker. Thy claim upon me is an absolute claim. I am the work of Thy hands. Yet I have allowed *my* sin to insult Thee, hurt Thee, separate me from Thee. I utterly put this away. I look back. A *mysterious* power seemed to tempt me and work upon me, and I deliberately gave way and turned from Thee. I have hardened my heart again and again against what I knew to be *right*. I, of my own will, have come under the sway of this awful power. In it is death and horror. Good Lord, deliver me.

*Like dark sea-bound caves of Ocean,
Echoing with the tempest's din ;
Filled with clamour, drenched in darkness,
So lie souls in Wilful Sin.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who art my first beginning and my last end, without whom I can do nothing, with whom I can do all things, give me grace so to realise the mystery and power of Sin in me, that I may strive against it with an earnest and faithful will : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Evening.**The Effects of Sin.**

TEXT.—“ *When Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin : and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.* ”—ST. JAMES i. 15.

Collect.

O LORD, we beseech Thee, absolve Thy people from their offences : that through Thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed. Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Reading.

IF we see that Sin is a fact, and a mysterious fact, we see also, in the world, plainly enough, many of its terrible *effects*.

Close upon Sin—as the shadow after the substance—comes Suffering. It is impossible to conceive this

world being made by a good God in its present state of misery. It may be, and it is, true that "out of darkness He bringeth light"; that Pain itself is transfigured, and may be made a blessing to a Christian; but *in itself* Pain is a very terrible thing. Our powers of feeling, which lead, and seem to be meant to lead, to happiness and pleasure, turn upon us as enemies, and bring us the most acute sufferings. So it is with Sorrow. It, too, has been, for a Christian, transformed by "the Man of Sorrows," but in itself it is a "cruel fellowship," a "Priestess in the vaults of death." Then Death itself! *That* we feel to be unnatural. It closes this scene of sense and time which has been so dear to us. It brings cruel partings and fills hearts with tears. It is revolting and dreadful, *in itself*, and man naturally shrinks from it. Holy Scripture reminds us that these are some of the *effects* of Sin. Terrible as they are, that from which they spring is infinitely more terrible. Sin is such a mystery, and also we are so used to it in our own souls, and in the world, that we only begin to realise its dreadfulness when we think of these effects. If a body passing to corruption is a dreadful spectacle, so is a soul lying "dead in trespasses and sins."

For the *effects* of Sin in the soul are clearly terrible to us, if we allow ourselves earnestly to think of them. It has the power of disguising itself, and so deceiving us. No one in the world would choose to commit a sin *as a sin*. It cannot win us until it is clothed in garments not its own. Pride calls itself proper self-respect. Covetousness parades it-

self as prudence. Wastefulness appears as generosity. Lust as affection. Thus the soul is blinded by Sin.

Then again, the Apostle St. James reminds us that Sin is perverted Desire. To possess Desire is not wrong: it is to be human. To misuse Desire is wrong—Desire has then become Lust. Lust leads on to, it gives birth to, Sin. Perverted Desire springs into wrong thoughts. Wrong thoughts allowed, lead on to words. Words and thoughts of Evil cherished, pass on into deeds. If the evil spreads it eats out the life of the Soul. No more light, no more warmth, no more happy union with God and goodness can be there. If Sin goes on to the bitter end, unrepented, unforgiven—that end is Death.

Meditation.

O MY GOD, as I look back upon life, how many sins rise before me! How many more have been mine which I know not of! How I have deceived myself in the past, calling evil good, and good evil! And Thou hast borne with me, and given me time for repentance! May I have grace to see my sin in its enormity, in its real naked hideousness, that I may shrink from it with horror and repent in truth.

*Sin is false and all-deceiving,
Showing fresh as morning breath,
Bright as opening flowers, yet leaving
Scent and dreadfulness of Death.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and be saved, forgive me when I have clung to my sin. Free me from its bands. Enlighten me that I may see its true character, and save me from its power and consequences : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Thursday after Ash Wednesday.

Morning.

Repentance.

TEXT.—“*I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned.*”—ST. LUKE xv. 18.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THERE is one way out of Sin. There is but one, but it is a sure way. True repentance is the path of escape from Sin. Because a man has sinned that is no reason why he should go on in Sin. “Sin, when it is finished,” brings death, but sin need not be “finished.”

One of the most beautiful and most powerful graces in the human soul is the grace of “the

broken and contrite heart." It is by a response to God's grace that the soul *awakens* to real facts. God leads souls in many ways. Sometimes the dreadful and inevitable consequences of Sin arouse the soul. Sin that had deceived by putting on a false appearance is now seen in its true colours. Its unsatisfying character, its power to corrupt and ruin character, its inevitable punishment, startle and rouse. This is a great mercy when we are roused to face facts. But this is not all. There may be a danger then of weak regrets, of looking back in an enervating despondency on the Past, even in settling down to the dangerous desolation of despair. But the penitent soul says, "I will arise and go to my Father, and say, Father, I have sinned."

True contrition is a noble virtue. It throws us out of ourselves and on to God. We begin to see the beauty of goodness, and the tender love of God. We begin to feel how ungrateful and unloving we have been to a good and loving Father. It is an act of real self-condemnation springing from real love.

Penitence is ennobling. Those who waken up to their own sins, face to face with God's goodness, are ennobled. It lifts the whole character. It produces and tones and develops many virtues. A penitent cannot forget his sin. He never thinks of it, however, in a maudlin, weakening way. He thinks of it, indeed, with self-aborrence and self-distrust, but only so that it makes him love God more. He knows and feels he has a Father who loves him, longs for him, will do anything for him. He feels bitterly how he has grieved Him. Just as we could never forgive

ourselves if we had struck and insulted one who had loved us very dearly, and to whom we owed much, and who had always been good and kind to us, so we feel we have treated badly Him to whom we owe all. So the soul in penitence is humbled but loving. It has become *real*. It now knows how those around it—friends and dear relatives—would shrink from it if they knew it *as it is*, and yet God does not shrink from it, but is always love. From this comes strength, endurance, patience, tenderness. It has touched *reality*. *This* life-long sorrow is life-long tenderness and strength. There is a calm and deepening hatred of Sin, a deepening and ennobling love of God.

Meditation.

MY GOD, Thou art my Father. I have disobeyed Thee, neglected Thee, forsaken Thee. O good and loving! I am Thy child, Thy wayward, wandering child. I come to Thee in trust and sorrow. Receive me, help me. My sin is ever before Thee, but with that sad memory is the certainty of Thy unfailing love.

*Love of God, endearing, strengthening,
Lighten all my heart within ;
Deepen in me strong, true sorrow,
Blasting all the power of Sin.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, whom I have so long and so often forsaken, I come to Thee entreating Thy

mercy. Fill me with Thy love, strengthen and accept my repentance : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

Godly Sorrow.

TEXT.—“*Godly sorrow worketh repentance.*”—2 COR. vii. 10.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent : Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THERE is nothing maudlin, feeble, sentimental, weakening in the sorrow of repentance. For Truth is always bracing and this sorrow comes from a clear view of Truth—a clear view of the seriousness of past Sin and the Love and Goodness of God. We have before us a high standard of life and character. Our circumstances may be commonplace and the sphere of our life narrow, yet God whispers to the soul and it sees a high standard. The atmosphere of

"the world" is different. There, men are content with a lower level. "After all," we are tempted to say, "why think too much of the Eternal?" The soul falls back from the standard it has clearly seen. It becomes disloyal to the Unseen. Then there is a falling away, an easy decline. The awakening comes. Now the Truth is seen. Now is real sorrow. And with it the steady resistance to Sin. It may be with many ups and downs ; it may be without complete success at once ; still there is, from it, constancy, a humble, that is a true, view of self, a quiet watchfulness, a wise indignation, and holy fear, and reparation—as far as may be, by grace—for the past.

Thus this sorrow, being the *real* attitude of a soul towards facts, strengthens and calms. It calms, for the motive of it is the Love of God. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." It strengthens, because the soul is true. Hollowness and unreality weaken. The soul has learnt to say in full conviction : "I have sinned." "I hate my sin." "I would undo it if I could." "It brought some measure of disorder into God's world." "It was opposed to His Will and purpose, with which I would be at one : and through it all He has loved me, watched over me, helped me, been patient with me, and called me back." This sorrow brings the soul into true relationship with God. It looks to its Father calmly, trustfully, though through manly tears. The unreal has passed. The real is there. There is quiet strength, vigour, calmness, humility, for godly sorrow has done its work.

How different are things around now. Once the soul was allowed to go with the stream of things, like the drift-wood in the current it was carried along. Now it has grown strong, with its eye on God, watching for *His* lead. "I will guide thee with mine eye." There may be, there will be, deep, real, strong sympathy with things around. The pursuits, the thoughts, the cares of others will not be disregarded. The family, the circle of acquaintance, the efforts of the social circle, of the place, of the nation, will not have ceased to interest. Yet there is a difference. The soul is no longer the bondsman of these. It is free. It will serve, for service is a high duty; but it will not be ruled by passing things. That deep relation to God places God where He should be. The quiet sorrow for ever having had it otherwise makes the soul large-hearted to others, tender and strong. Sorrow towards God is the freeing, and enlarging, and strengthening, and elevating of character.

Meditation.

How often have I sinned against Thee, my chief, my only good! I have been weak, proud, carried away by the voice of the world, following my own desires, pleasing self. I see Thee, how glorious Thou art. Ah! may my sorrow be deep and true. Henceforth would I be real, and, seeing all things in Thee, and measuring all things by Thee, grow more true, diligent, faithful, humble, strong.

*May I grow, with deep, true tears,
Chastened by Contrition's rod,
Strong and loving 'mid my peers,
Child-like, humble towards my God.*

Prayer.

O LORD and Heavenly Father, by whose grace and patient love the hardest heart can be broken, show me myself: show me my sin; show me Thy love. Give me the grace of an ever-deepening sorrow, and make me thereby strong, true, and humble: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday after Ash Wednesday.

Morning.

Self-command.

TEXT.—“*Mortify your members which are upon earth.*”

—COL. iii. 5.

“*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way; even by ruling himself after Thy Word.*”—PS. cxix. 9.

“*If ye, through the Spirit, shall mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*”—ROM. viii. 13.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all Mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

EVEN when we are most depressed by the thought of our sins and failures, we are certain of the wonderful sympathy of God. The soul in contrition, that is in an attitude of *truth* as to itself and as to God, has,

and may feel that it has, a High Priest who *can* be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Cowardice and cowardly fear need have no place in the penitent soul. The holy fear of God is one thing. Cowardly fear is another. It is constantly rebuked in Scripture as being sinful. There is a manly and vigorous effort of Will which is a duty.

Δύναμις, ἀγάπη, σωφρονισμός, it has been justly pointed out, are those forces which the soul has to oppose to δειλία—that is energy, love, and self-control are the religious powers for conquering sinful fear. With true contrition should go hand in hand self-rule, a vigorous self-command, a stern self-discipline. Self-discipline should not be, and need not be, morbid, maudlin, excessive. Violent asceticism is not for many. And there is a curious, morbid tendency in fallen human nature, at times, to welcome forms of self-torture where there is no real contrition at all. People have been known to sin, and to console themselves feebly by suffering. Suffering, self-denial, and so on, are not *in themselves* good; their power is from their motive and from the attitude of mind with which they are connected.

Self-rule is necessary for every religious man. A constant and fallacious excuse for sin is, “It is natural.” There is much that is “natural,” which has to be put aside or treated with great restraint. Nature in its “natural” state produces weeds. Man untrained, undisciplined, is overwhelmed with sin.

Mortification of wrong tendencies is plainly taught in Scripture. Contrition induces mortification in a

right way. A sense of sin before the soul and a sense of the love of God lead naturally to the desire to mortify all that has led to what is wrong. There are many things in this beautiful, sad world which *in themselves* are among God's good gifts ; but if they have been misused, the soul feels and realises that by it they may have to be refused and put aside, not from a puritanical contempt for God's gifts, but because the Will has been treacherous, and Desire has been mutinous, and things, in themselves innocent, have been misused. A truly loving, contrite soul traces sin to its real source. Many an innocent pleasure it denies itself, because it has a religious desire to make reparation for the past, to punish itself for sin committed. This mortification is noble and healthy.

Side by side with true penitence, rather as a part of it and outcome of it, men learn a noble self-command. The deeper, the more loving the penitence, the more sober and calm and unfailing grows that self-command. It touches little things: It puts a check upon rising temper. It rouses to watchfulness and briskness against slackness and sloth. It helps men cheerfully to take trouble. It kindles moral courage and enables men to stand firm against wrong opinions. It stimulates men to turn swiftly from the first encroachments of evil thoughts and recollection of the pleasures of past sin.

Meditation.

How often, O God, has my will given way before the enticements of wrong desire ! This has deceived

me and then betrayed me. I have been weak and foolish. Nothing can atone for the Past but the precious Blood of Christ : but now I join with my Saviour's Will and Self-Sacrifice. If I have done wrong, *now* I can watch and pray and mortify myself in all that tempted me. So may I grow in godly sorrow and in manly self-command.

*Love and Sorrow close combining,
Bring the sinful soul's release ;
Stern self-discipline refining,
Brings it strength and inward peace.*

Prayer.

HEAVENLY Father, whom I have so many times forsaken and grievously offended, receive me, Thy wandering child, of Thy mercy, and give me grace to rule myself according to Thy law : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

Mortification.

TEXT.—“ *The body is dead because of sin.* ”—ROM. viii. 10.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all

them that are penitent : Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

CONTRITION—true Penitence—implies mortification and self-discipline. It takes all mere hardness and self-pleasings out of such action. That action, then, becomes the true and earnest desire to make reparation, so far as it may be made, for the Past ; to restrain and gradually kill all those unregulated desires which have led to sin, and to hold communion with God, more and more in a spirit and temper freed from the enslaving power of Evil.

It is in a strong sense of this, and with a noble humility, that St. Paul says “the body is dead” (*i.e.*, treated as a dead thing) “because of sin.” The Apostle realised with extraordinary distinctness what God is and what he himself was, how great had been God’s love and patience towards him. Like all true penitents, he thought much of his own sin, whilst showing striking tenderness towards others. To us his sins seem slight indeed when compared with our own. He, however, saw with the true light of an illuminated soul. The result was a heartfelt, manly, abiding sorrow. As an outcome of that sorrow there was a life of mortification and self-discipline. This is all the more a power of teaching to us because *he*, compared with us, was

so comparatively sinless ; because his mortifications, while severe, were so natural, so unaffected ; because from such self-discipline in him came unflagging courage and ever-increasing strength and tenderness. "I strike my body hard blows," he says, "and bring it into subjection." "The body" he treated as "a dead thing, because of sin." St. Paul was no strained despiser of Human Nature. He was full of human sympathy. He was determined, however, to restore the proper relation of the higher and lower nature when it had been disturbed by sin.

Contrition, then, implies some measure of self-discipline and of mortification.

"Selfishness," it has been well said, "in one form or another, is lying in wait for every human being." This creeps into the soul even of those who, on the whole, are doing right. A life may be active and vigorous. In it there may be a strenuous effort to do what has to be done, and do it well in a busy life. Yet, by the very force of external energy, the heart may be stolen away from God. Or there may be excellent intentions, and a clear view of duty, and yet a shrinking from taking trouble, and the creeping sickness of Sloth may kill spiritual life. We may lay the "flattering unction" to our soul that we are doing well, and so slacken in watchfulness, and encourage blinding pride. It is right to have a real satisfaction in working, and working well. It is not wrong to have times of rest, and to rejoice in the comforts and consolations of times of quiet. Still, these must not be allowed to take the spring out of our briskness and alertness when the time of

work comes ; nor any such joy to steal our heart from God, that we lose dependence upon Him, and forget in the main thoughts and principles of the soul that all work is valuable because we have been set to do it by Him.

So in the region of the affections, where God gives us such endless blessings, we must remember that all real love is from Him, is an image of Himself, that it must be consecrated by His grace. We must ever recall this fact, that Strength is a duty: that the true soul does not permit what is maudlin, sentimental, effeminate, much less impure. That we need always masculine vigour so as not to weaken or impair the fibre of character.

From all this we see the need of self-discipline. The Cross must be laid, wisely but firmly, on every department of our nature. We are to make no terms with Evil. We have to mortify our hearts, our minds, our imaginations, our thoughts. In this, as in all other things, we are to try to put aside selfishness. We must, by grace, with contrition, carry on self-discipline. Contrition will make it unaffected and tender. It will make contrition deep and strong.

Meditation.

How often in life have I sinned, even in my better efforts, by want of the strong spirit of mortification ! In thought, in affection, in desire, in imagination, above all, in tongue, how terrible has been the want of self-discipline. As Thou hast loved me, O Lord, and spared me in many sins, I come back to

Thee, my Father, with love and sorrow, and a determination, by Thy grace, for a more mortified life.

*Strike, nor spare the soul's betrayers,
Whilst thou drawest human breath ;
Love of God and strong self-ruling
Bring the soul to Life through Death.*

Prayer.

O LORD and Heavenly Father, who knowest our weakness, but who art tender and strong for thy children, give me grace so truly to love Thee, and to sorrow for my sins against Thee, that I may discipline and mortify all that, in me, is contrary to Thy will : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday after Ash Wednesday.

Morning.

Motive and Power of Repentance.

TEXT.—“*Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*”—COL. iii. 17.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent : Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

ALL efforts of Repentance, indeed all spiritual efforts, are not only “toilsome and incomplete,” but without life and form if, in them, we are alone. In a true turning of life, in a real repentance of soul and heart, in all the small corrections of life which go with true repentance, Christians are reminded they must be with Jesus.

(1) To do all in His Name would mean to do it in the high temper of His life and work. If He walked on earth and performed small or common tasks, they were done in a heavenly temper. Self-denial and reform of life may have a hardness and ugliness about them—even when real—if done in a hard and merely business-like temper. Small things become great ; small sacrifices become powerful and beautiful if they spring from noble motives. It is a quiet, thoughtful, heavenly temper, a tone of mind full of the other world, which gives them majesty and beauty. Awkwardness, selfishness, self-consciousness, are taken from them by this heavenly temper. So, with high and great thoughts of God, we may, in our repentance, self-discipline, self-rule, “do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.”

(2) Again, we may, by divine grace, act “for His sake.” In answer to prayer, and when we practically take home Christian teaching, we may in some measure, though it be a small measure, realise how much the Lord Jesus has done for us. We cannot, indeed, readily enter into the full mystery of redemption. We can see that He seems to say to us: “If I could not make you understand, at least I could come and be with you in your struggle. I have lived your human life. I have undergone temptations like you. I have suffered pain and passed through the gates of Death.” When we feel Sin, as we do when once conscience is awakened, then it is much to know that we have a Saviour. It is much to know that that Saviour has loved and loves us. Gratitude and affection are awakened.

We know what it is to do troublesome things for one we love. Distasteful tasks become bearable when that motive is behind them. It is not that the things are in themselves pleasant; it is that the great love we have for one, for whom we watch and work, illumines the darkness, and takes the edge off the trial. Nay, there comes to be a sacred halo about the task. It associates itself with a beloved hand, a dear face. It is changed, and the whole attitude of the soul, in doing it, is changed too. So may we learn in love and gratitude to "do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

(3) Again, we may do our acts and exercises of repentance and self-discipline with Christ as our Leader. He is ever near us. If we come to welcome Him in all our doings, Faith tells us He is ready with His sympathy. So He was on earth. Far above His disciples, He still led them on in all things. He threw light and strength into all He required of them to do. Confused and distressed at first, they trusted and grew in knowledge, until the Holy Spirit came and *showed* them plainly the teaching and meaning of their Master. So, taking Him as their leader, they did all "in His Name."

Meditation.

IF I have sinned, as I have sinned, I must "arise," and exert myself, and act, and discipline myself. Often have I flagged in this. It is with Thee, in Thy grace, by Thy love and power alone, that I can succeed. By God's help, I will rise to nobler motives, and "do all in the Name of Jesus."

*“Thou the grace of Life supplying,
Thou the strength for Life wilt give;
Dead to Self, and daily dying,
Life of Life, by Thee we live.”*

Prayer.

KINDLE, O Father, in our souls, the love of Thy dear Son, and give me grace, give us all grace, with love, gratitude, faithful effort, to do all things in and for Him: through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Crown of Repentance.

TEXT.—“*Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*”

—I COR. x. 31.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

To turn from Sin is an act of love. It is also an act of effort. If the heart be turned to God, the

practical consequence of that will be shown in all the details of the life.

Repentance is, therefore, trying and laborious. It has also its blessed side. No moral effort ever can be without a blessing. The great moral and spiritual effort of Repentance, attended with self-rule and mortification, and an increasing and loving contrition, is followed by blessing.

Repentance brings *Comfort*. We know, as a matter of clear, human experience, that sharing sorrow with another, that acknowledging our faults to another, does bring relief. Deliberate putting aside what we know to be wrong—even when the effort is painful—brings comfort. The effort involved in Repentance becomes more comforting when we realise that the results of it go far beyond ourselves. The smallest acts of noble self-conquest and unselfish self-denial may redound to the Glory of God.

By that we mean : (1) They help to the spread of God's Kingdom, of the triumph of Goodness. Unseen, but truly, the Battle of Life goes on. Powers of Evil are ever trying to assert themselves over our souls. We know this from Holy Scripture. We know it from experience. To lift up the heart to God, to subdue self, to deny self, to work, to suffer, to strive, with a noble purpose and a real sense of the greatness of Righteousness, is to advance the Kingdom of Goodness ; is "to do all to the Glory of God."

(2) Again : It is a mysterious truth that we may "*please* God." Strange that creatures like ourselves

can bring joy to the Eternal and All Blessed! Yet, in some real sense, so it is. As we can, alas! "*grieve the Spirit,*" so we can rejoice that loving Comforter. Doing right, doing it with a loving heart, even in little things, is "doing all for the Glory of God."

(3) Further, we may well remember, especially in Lent, how sacred is all human life and work. We are apt to measure things by their size, their worldly importance, the noise they make among men. Not so in the things of God. Heroic battles are fought and victories won which the world never sees. The truest efforts of the soul are often in small and insignificant matters, but with a high purpose and a noble one. Whatever work we have in life, into which Providence has called or guided us, that is *our* work. None can quite do it as we can. We are not to think it too insignificant to be sanctified and fortified by prayer. The natural trifles of daily life take a noble significance, and have far-reaching and eternal consequences, done in a purified spirit and with an eye raised Heavenward—done "to the Glory of God."

Meditation.

How often have I failed in the great duty-loving discharge of lesser duties! Ah! my God, I have forgotten that my earthly tasks are of Thy appointment! To keep a high and pure spirit: to do the small things of every day with feet on earth but heart in Heaven: this be my aim—so to act according to the purpose of my being—to the Glory of God.

*May I in all tasks and duties—
All the works that God has given—
Hallow all and do them nobly
With a purpose raised to Heaven.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, by whose Providence all our work is appointed, give me grace to do it earnestly and to Thy glory : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

First Sunday in Lent.

Morning.

The Necessity of Temptation.

TEXT.—“*The hour of temptation . . . shall come upon all the world to try them.*”—REV. iii. 10.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

WHATEVER be the explanation of the mystery of the origin of Evil, one thing appears clear. If we are in an evil world ; if there is a necessary opposition between Right and Wrong ; if *the* important thing in life is to choose well ; if man has (as he has) the dignity and mystery of Free Will—then temptation, trial, the opportunity of doing wrong if we please, is a necessity.

The moral side of life is the interesting side. It

has been said that the two great worlds of real interest are the starry firmament and the Moral Law. It has been truly said, too, that the moral question, the question of the choice of Right or Wrong really gives the interest to all others. "Man," says Pascal, "is only a reed, the weakest in Nature, but he is a reed that thinks. There is no need for the whole universe to arm itself in order to crush him. A vapour, a drop of water, is enough to kill him ; but should the universe crush him, man would be more noble than that which kills him, because he knows that he dies, and the advantage which the universe has over him. The universe knows nothing." Man is "accountable to that high law of Right and Wrong which lifts" him "above everything else that he knows of" in the visible universe. How we bear ourselves in life ; how we choose among the competing attractions which offer themselves to our Wills—that is *the* interesting thing in human history—the moral question is the supreme question.

This can only be if there be trial. We need not, then, complain of temptation. We need not ask *why* it must be. God's government of His own world is in His own hands, and it is a very wide and mysterious matter. We can know but a part. Useless and thoughtless to ask *why* in such things. The Moral World is the Great World, and moral trial without temptation it is impossible to conceive.

This life may be fairly thought of as a scene of trial. From the very opening of our days we are on our trial. The ups and downs of human history,

the swaying backwards and forwards of the movements of some are all examples of human souls tempted to do wrong and resisting, or tempted to do wrong and refusing. Each one of us has Reason. We are able—to some degree—to take the measure of things and realise their relations. We have Conscience. Whatever it be, an authoritative Voice commands and approves, or disapproves, in all the actions of life, and we know that it is authoritative. We acquire Knowledge. We learn much of the ways of men and things. We have the power of Will. No sophistry can ever persuade us that we are not ourselves *causes*. That

“ Our Wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our Wills are ours to make them Thine.”

At every turn of the road the question presents itself to us, *How* shall these equipments be used ? Above all, “how shall ” we “use that characteristic and unique prerogative of Will ? ” Thus it is we *must* be tried : tried to test what metal we are made of ; tried to make that metal strong. Then there is Desire. We are fallen creatures. Desire has been perverted. It is perverted ; it is strong. Given the facts of life before us, then temptation is a necessity. This need not depress us. We have also with us, if we will, the Grace of God.

Meditation.

AWFUL, O my God, is my life. It is short ; it is eventful. Thou hast taken me into the secret of my existence. Thou hast made me like Thyself, with a

power of Will. Often have I weakened my power by evil choice. Still, choice is mine, and in my own power. Shall I be filled with craven fear at the fact of temptation? Surely not. It must be, if I am to regain and perfect Thine image in me. I will face the fact, with watchfulness, humility, and courage. "Try me and turn me forth sufficiently impressed."

*Life is battle. In my station
Placed, may I nor flinch nor flee ;
Tried by fire of keen temptation,
Make me worthy, Lord, of Thee.*

Prayer.

O GOD and Heavenly Father, who hast placed us in a life of trial. Give us grace that by no temptation we may be drawn from Thee. Grant me that, resisting all that is contrary to Thy Will, I may grow in strength and be restored to Thy likeness : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

The Nearness to Christ in Temptation.

TEXT.—"*In all points tempted as we are, yet without Sin.*"

—HEB. iv. 15.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such absti-

nence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

THE Incarnation—the coming of the Eternal God to be one of ourselves—has taught us the dignity and seriousness of our lives. We know now how completely there is, in God, an “answering Mind” to us.

Few things bring this home to us more than our Lord’s attitude towards temptation. The mysterious story of this week’s Gospel is emphatic on that point. (1) It was after receiving to His Human Nature the consecration of Baptism and gift of the Holy Ghost that temptation came. (2) His first and exemplar trial touched every part of His Humanity. The natural and right desires had to be mortified when indulgence of them conflicted with God’s Will. The desires of a high spirit and human ambition had also to be subdued to complete submission to the trying requirements of the divine purpose. What might legitimately have been longed for was not to be purchased by any concordat with Evil. Great ends were not to be attained by ungodly means. Even the true exercise of trust in the providential watchfulness and penetrating care of God was not to be strained so as to dispense with right human effort and obedience to the evident intentions of God for human life. Then as the sacred

Life went on, and such temptations developed more and more into a fulness of trial, temptation was ever present with the lofty and suffering Humanity of Christ. The circumstances of His earthly life, the inevitable trials of His mission to men supplied occasion for temptation at every step. The foolishness, and failure in understanding of friends, the spite, rancour, cunning, unflagging and vigorous assault of foes ; the ordinary trials of a self-sacrificing and difficult life ; the abandonment of home and dear relatives ; the physical weariness and discomfort ; the unsettlement ; the constant exertion ; then the sorrow of mind ; the oncoming of down-heartedness ; the disappointment ; the loneliness ; the rude and sharp hurts to noble feelings and warm affections—all supplied food for temptation. The Divine Humanity was *true*, so our Lord *felt* it all ; the resistance was complete, but the strain and pain are beyond our imagination.

It is truly said, “ Even in that awful condition of man’s nature and life which we call Temptation, He, the Holiest, chose to have His part. It was not enough that He would be born as we are born, that He would live as we live, and speak our words, and think with our thoughts, and love with our affections, that He would suffer as we suffer, and die as we die—this was not enough. To be perfect man, He need not sin ; but He *must* be tempted, and He *was* tempted, ‘ like as we are, yet without sin.’ For He, the Redeemer and Pattern of the human race, must fulfil to the uttermost the law of its condition. He must, in all things which were outside of that

very inmost self, that Personality which chooses and wills, and over which in Him no degenerate taint, or infirmity, or soiling touch of evil could pass—in all other things, He must bear the burdens and know the trials of being a man. He must be like unto His brethren, if He was indeed to be their brother. And He would be like them, that they might be sure of the sympathy and answering mind of Him in whom they were to trust for everything, in that interval of waiting during which they were not to see His face—that interval of waiting and preparation for our real and unknown and inconceivable destiny, which we call life. He drew near to them in everything that was morally possible. . . . As He shared the consequences of their Sin, their punishment, so He would share those outward conditions which make them Sin.”

Meditation.

TEMPTATION, O my Saviour, has been, is severe and terrible. How often have I yielded and sinned ! Life has seemed lonely. Faith has failed. Yet I am not alone. Blessed is the thought—may it never leave me—full of consolation and strength, that Thou feelest *with* me, knowest my trial, hast “suffered being tempted,” and art “able to succour them that are tempted.” With Jesus, I need not fear, but be brave.

*In the hour of sharp temptation,
Feel not lonely, stand, be brave ;
Jesus is in close relation
With thy trials. He can save.*

Prayer.

O LORD and Heavenly Father, who hast sent Thy Son not only to die for us, but also to be our example and helper : Give me grace, in humility and resolve, not to fear temptation, but to meet and resist it with my Saviour : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after the First Sunday.

Morning.

Self-renunciation.

TEXT.—“*Not I, but Christ liveth in me.*”—GAL. ii. 20.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sakes didst fast forty days and forty nights: Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

HONESTY and strength—these the soul needs to overcome temptation. There may be permitted a secret hollowness, and then it may allow itself to be “fascinated, spell-bound, blinded by evil.” It must break through all the meshes and entanglements which are woven about it. What hinders? One thing, among many—self-love. The love of the lower, pleasure-seeking self. This has to be con-

quered, and it is no painless struggle. The encouragement is to be found in Christ. He, the true Man, did it—so, by His strength, may we.

Self-renunciation is the most difficult thing in the whole world. For this, however, we must strive. In some degree it is necessary for all Christians. In the highest degree it is the glory of the saints. Sin is always selfishness in some form. The soul full of self is ready to yield to temptation. Habits of self-renunciation are the best preparation for resistance.

The worldly habits of the ordinary life of the world may be made part of ourselves and enervate us, or they may be treated in a straightforward and natural way, and used as material of our exercise and trial. If these become overwhelming weights, bearing us down in our battle, we must put them on one side; instead of self-love and self-seeking, our work is to practise the Simplicity, Mortification, and Humility which were so conspicuous in the earthly life and character of our Lord. It has been said, indeed, that a true Christian surrender to God consists in the practical understanding of these three virtues.

The more true, thorough, searching self-renunciation is, the more it conforms the character to that of Christ. It is, indeed, nothing else but the struggle and courage of *reality*. It is the recovery of the true state of man—a simple effort to make God's Will our end; a just estimate of ourselves; a vigorous restraint of all that hinders.

“Whosoever wills to come after me,” said Christ, “let him deny himself.” We may allow easy *wishes* :

our Lord speaks of the resolute *Will*. All depends upon that first ; and that may be strengthened by God's grace. By this we learn really, in our own circumstances, to try to follow the example of Jesus Christ. In doing so there is the readiness, by divine grace, to "take up" our cross ; that is, to bear or do all that God permits or requires of service, however trying, in the course of the journey of life. The Christian has to have in his calling the ambition, steadiness, self-conquest which all men who succeed in any calling must show. Why should the manliness be wanting to the Christian, in his great undertaking, which is evident in the energetic man who denies himself in things of interest, or ambition, or pleasure in ordinary life ? Nothing great is achieved without sacrifice.

What do we require ? A strong Will, and a persevering effort. God's grace helps in this. There are special inclinations and tendencies belonging to us all. These we have to resolve and try to disregard when they cross the path of Duty. We are swimming against the stream, beating up against a torrent. We must live in prayer. So is the Love of God deepened, and trust in Him strengthened. Set the mind to love to do God's will, *then* we strive and pray. "The heart," says St. Augustine, "that ceases to love ceases to pray." Each day, in prayer, look forward to what must be done, what must be abandoned, what must be overcome. So thoughts become regulated. So the heart becomes *ready* for self-renunciation. So the soul is unencumbered for the battle with Temptation.

Meditation.

OFTEN, O Lord, have I fallen before the assaults of temptation, for I have been too tender to my own wishes, and too swift to follow sinful inclinations. I will put Christ in place of Self in the soul. "Not I, but Christ": so may I be free from the bands that bind me, and ready to fight temptation when it comes.

*"Thou the grace of Life supplying,
Thou the strength for Life wilt give;
Dead to self and daily dying,
Life of life, by Thee we live."*

Prayer.

O LORD and loving Father, form within my soul the image and likeness of Thy dear Son. Give me grace to renounce myself. Grant that He may dwell in my heart through faith, that so I may resist temptation and grow in strength: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

Self-abandonment to God's Will.

TEXT.—*"I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father."*

—ST. JOHN v. 30.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights: Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may

ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

TEMPTATION is a necessity. Trial must come. Rather, trial is always with us. Looking round, we find it not difficult to see that others are on their trial, are advancing or going back. It is more difficult to see that so it is with us ourselves. We also are being proved, are being made to show what is in us, and what we are in very earnest, as we see and read of others being tried. We notice what troubles, trials and temptations beset the miserable and the poor; also subtle, but severe trials are around the well-to-do, the rich, the comfortable. We may forget, but, it is true, *we* also are being tried. There comes to us temptation in its "solemn, eventful" shape.

'In that quiet, prosaic round of business and domestic life, in that silent, unperceived growth in our character, of habits, and motives, and tastes, and judgments," this "heroic work" is really going on. *We* are subjected to the choice between good and evil, duty and desire, the things of time and the things eternal, the grace of God and the passions of the Flesh. It is, indeed, true of us all. In a hundred ways there is resistance to temptation and victory, or compliance with it and defeat. Thus is character being formed for the last great life. Thoughtfully to carry with us, deep in our own souls, the recollection that we are on trial, this is much.

To meet temptation we must have *principles*. One is an effort to abandon ourselves to the Will of God. God leads souls in many ways. Some He draws by tender touches. These have light from Him, and consolations, and powerful attractions. Others He leads in hard and rough ways, and by the gravest difficulties and trials, or by the little anxieties and constant cares of life.

“God fulfils Himself in many ways.”

One thing is certain : that, however rough, or however attractive be the way by which we are led, “the Will of God,” for us, “is our sanctification.” We cannot doubt God’s Will for us in the main. The circumstances in which, by His Providence, we are placed ; the attractions to higher or nobler things which He gives to our hearts ; the sacrifices which He demands from us, and which are associated with our place in life ; the inner feelings of our hearts in our higher moments—all these point towards what is God’s Will. We can well believe that if with all our hearts we embrace God’s Will and Way for us, there is nothing in life that does not lead us on aright. The petty trials of every day, the giving up our own inclination in a hundred little ways, in order to do our duty, as also the serious trials, the graver sorrows, all become means of grace if we are set to do God’s Will, as they become sources of temptation if we are set to seek our own.

It is well to listen, in solemn moments, to God’s Voice in the soul, to withdraw into ourselves to hear what He would have us to do, and to renew in inten-

tion from time to time our surrender to Him. The more the heart is set, not on its own will but on God's Will, the more temptation is resisted and trial nobly borne. Let this be the prayer of life : "Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God."

Meditation.

How often in life has self-will been my stumbling-block ! Looking back, the soul sees now how, again and again, falls have come, sin has followed, because self, not God, was the object. Let me resolve, with manly effort, to put aside this self which dogs my path. What matters it as to pains or pleasures, if only the highest, if only God's, will be done.

*All the trial tasks of living,
All the good and all the ill,
Prove a power, because life-giving,
If I seek Thy holy Will.*

Prayer.

O FATHER of mercies and God of all comfort, receive my prayer. Amidst all the joys and sorrows, dangers and temptations of life, give me Grace to see Thy hand, and, above all, to seek to do Thy Will : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Tuesday after the First Sunday.

Morning.

The Treacheries of the Human Will.

TEXT.—“*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?*”—JER. xvii. 9.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

RELIGION is a substantial thing or it is nothing. In fallen man the recognition of the tie binding the soul to God must be a real recognition, or it is vain. The perversion of our nature through Sin, however, makes a difficulty. Man is too great to close his eyes altogether to his greatness. Man has his desires so ill-regulated that he tries to act as though he knew nothing of that greatness. So it is that we form superficial notions about God and the unseen.

So it is we make our relation to the invisible a matter of words. Anything to keep religion, but to empty it of its force and requirements. If Christianity is truly to affect us it must tell upon *character*. The great danger in the severe requirements of Right is the danger of a make-believe; the danger of a hollowness and unreality which make a ruin of the spiritual life.

By "the heart" the Prophet seems to mean the whole outfit of Desire and Will. In fallen man this is "deceitful above all things," and, indeed, what we have to fear in our battle with temptation is "the treacheries of the will."

Life, especially civilized life, is a very complex thing. Yet there is in man's better self a longing for simplicity. Rousseau tried to find *that*, in teaching a recurrence to the childhood of our race. That was false, and, therefore, useless. We can have simplicity in life, however complex be the details, only by allowing it to revolve round one great principle. In all the troubles besetting them and their country, the Psalmists found consolation and a unifying principle in the greatness and the sovereignty of God.

So the human will, impelled and inspired by complex desires, loses its simplicity. Under the inspiration of Sin and self-seeking Desire, we become accomplished self-deceivers. We can put a fair face on a dark thing. We can make ourselves believe something we *desire* to believe. Unless the soul is weaned from the world, and watchful, it will put its hands to what is bad, base, dishonour-

able. It is never wholly unaware of the danger and the wrong, but it can—so strangely self-deceiving are we—tread deep down into the lowest depths of our being the disturbing conviction, and act upon the plausible arguments and handy casuistries with which we have furnished ourselves. Nothing is more important, in fighting the battle of life, than the recovery of a straight and simple and honest Will.

“The heart is deceitful.” To resist temptation, to use trial well for its intended purpose, we must *suspect ourselves*.

Sin, wrong desire, calls us to what is unhealthy, unmanly, tortuous. God says: “My son, give me thine heart.” Only by deliberately and earnestly *putting God first* can we become secure against the treachery of the Will. With Him as our first, our central Guide, we shall neither distort truth nor do wrong nor lower the standard which we know to be the right one—for any purpose, however high it may appear. It will rid us of the distrustful temper, and teach us rather to suffer wrong than to be suspicious. God made our object, this clears and simplifies the action of the will. Near to Him, our lives will become sincere and healthy, and our Wills become no longer treacherous, but healthy and straight.

Meditation.

Too often, O Father, in the darkness of my sinful soul, have I persuaded myself to Wrong under the guise of Right. O deceitful heart, O treacherous

Will, keep near to God. Have no more double dealings and self-deceivings. God is thine object ! How can temptation assail thee, if thou art set to do His Will.

*Treacherous and self-deceiving
Is the heart enslaved by Ill :
Straight, and honest, and believing,
When once set to do God's Will.*

Prayer.

O FATHER of strength and tenderness, give me grace to set Thee always before me. Take from me all self-seeking, all duplicity, all self-deceiving. Give me grace in Thy light to see light, and to walk in the straight path of a holy life : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

Honesty of Heart.

TEXT.—“ *An honest and good heart.* ”—LUKE viii. 15.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who

livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

OUR Lord describes the true state of a Christian really engaged in battle with temptation, and on the way to Victory, as "an honest and good heart."

There is, then, such a thing. "Deceitful above all things" as the heart may be and is, it may be cured of its disease. There can be no doubt that some natures are, to begin with, more simple and "straight" than others. Whatever perplexities and difficulties may present themselves from the mystery of heredity, this *is* a certain fact. Still, the "honest and good heart" is possible for all who seek it, however much greater be the difficulty of attaining to it in some cases than in others. Very elementary true self-examination will show us if our danger lies in the direction of inexactness, double-dealing, duplicity, self-deception, want of straightforward purpose, and so on. If we find it so, we must set about, with all our powers, to correct it. Nothing will take the place, in the growth of character, of honesty of heart.

The duty before us here is to watch and act with *directness of purpose*. We must cultivate honesty with ourselves. Then we go on, infallibly, to honesty with God ; and so with man.

This does not hinder us from following our Lord's example and not committing ourselves to men. We may be entirely honest and yet act with wisdom and not "wear our hearts on our sleeves." The point is

the fixed effort to keep an honest and *direct purpose*. "To be, not merely to appear," the "*Esse non videri*," is the Christian motto. We must learn to put away "by ends." To cherish these is the destruction of character. All sense of honour, not to say of spiritual rectitude, is undermined by exalting into the highest place that double-faced cunning which some natures are proud of.

It is possible, and it is necessary if temptation is to be resisted in the great crises of life, to watch and pray that the heart be *sound*; that we can be trusted and relied upon, just because we mistrust Self and trust God; that the heart be *healthy*—freed from the diseases of tricky ways and insecure principles; that the heart be *strong*—the nature, by grace, learned in and practised in a noble and calm self-command. This can be achieved by grace. We must seek for and use God's grace. Much unsoundness of heart comes from cowardice—fear of consequences, want of promptitude and alertness in doing right. God's grace gives courage, quick readiness, a clear glance beyond immediate consequences to the approving "Well done" of the Great Judge.

Then also the *habit* may be acquired, if we try in the detail of acts, of sharp turning away from the allurements of crooked ways. They are often flowery and smooth, and the direct road is often rough and unattractive; but quick and decisive refusal may become a *habit*. It is never well to dally with temptation.

Further, we may have, and lay deep in our very

selves, a guiding *principle* : “ Suffer loss rather than do wrong.” Acts of heroism, which move all men, in brave soldiers, have come from this principle, sometimes in its least attractive form. How much more for the soldiers of the Cross ! And we cultivate it by —while condemning their sin—trying to see the Christ *in* others which may be drawn out in them.

The *results* are rich indeed. To the “ honest and good heart ” comes clearness of vision, readiness of mind to receive God’s teaching, and to keep and use it ; then comes the power to withstand temptation, and to grow in character.

Meditation.

Deep are the workings of my heart. Often have I in cowardice or slackness allowed the play of crooked principles. O that I may turn and cling to a direct purpose, a clear and faithful view of truth and duty, and have and use grace to keep the heart honest, healthy, sound—so will I bring forth fruit to God’s glory.

*Quit the crooked paths of Evil,
Sin’s delights leave painful smart ;
Face temptations of the Devil
With the sound and honest heart.*

Prayer.

O MY FATHER, give me the grace of truth, simplicity, honesty, in all things. For Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

Wednesday after the First Sunday.

Morning.

Cheerfulness.

TEXT.—“*Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice.*”

—PHIL. iv. 4.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

THE fight with temptation is the constant fact in the battle of life. One great power of victory is Christian cheerfulness.

A want of this is doubtless connected with matters of health and physical constitution, but even these hindrances may be overcome, and cheerfulness acquired. Self keeps it back. “Except ye be converted, *and become as little children,*” said our Lord, “ye cannot enter in.” To be cheerful, we must put God

in place of self, and cultivate the child-like mind and confidence in God. We must take ourselves as we find ourselves. Well, we are weak, we fall. All the more reason have we for looking up. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I," so says the Psalmist. If we are weak, and do fall, we have to look up to God to lift us up, even though we may again fall, and again need to be lifted up.

Things may be difficult. Perplexities may be many. Anxieties may be overwhelming. Well, when we have the honest heart set to do His Will, we may have confidence in God that He will show us what is best to be done, and how trouble may be borne. From this confidence comes a cheerful spirit amid whatever trials.

One thing we can be sure of, the unfathomable mercy and the tender love of God. This has been shown to us in the life and words of our Divine Master who came to reveal the Father. We have a Father who cares for us. If we "cast all our care upon Him," as "He careth for" us, the heart may be lighter, and the life one of cheerfulness. It has been truly said: "The remedy for all disturbing cares is a great confidence in God; . . . it is not merely for things spiritual, it is for all things generally, that we must have confidence. When God sends us matters of anxiety, He prepares for us help."

Then we know that Hope is one of those three chief forces of manly strength (or "Virtues") which unite the soul with God. Despondency and despair

are sins—sins against God's high goodness. They also weaken the moral fibre of the soul. They are a surrender of moral purpose. They are a yielding to, they are a preparation for, temptation. Hope trains the character, because it means a serious moral exertion. It implies an exercise of the will, and one, too, not devoid of difficulty. It means strength. It *is* a victory, and from it comes, more and more, the play of a cheerful temper emptying temptation of its miasma, like the sunshine drinking up the unhealthy mists.

Then again, Joy is itself a "fruit of the spirit." With Love and Peace it is the attitude of the soul towards the God it loves. From it the calm sunlight of cheerfulness spreads over the whole life.

And it is to be remembered that we have to *exert* ourselves to maintain cheerfulness. We may in this, as in other things, "let ourselves go," and soon there grows a moroseness, grimness, gloominess, inequality of temper, trying to all around us, and laying our own souls open to the assaults of sin. This we must withstand. "How best," it was once asked, "can temptation be resisted?" The answer was, first cheerfulness, then secondly cheerfulness, then thirdly cheerfulness. For indeed this is a form of courage based on confidence in God which is *the* power against temptation.

Meditation.

MANY a time have I given way to gloom, despondency, downheartedness, and so have I fallen before my enemy. O my God, in Thee is my confidence,

and how can I but rejoice and keep a cheery spirit
when I rest on Thee.

*Brisk the breeze and bright the sunlight,
Gladdening streams, flowers, grassy sod :
Heaven-fresh breeze and sparkling sunlight,
Cheer the soul that trusts in God.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, full of pity and tenderness
to Thy children, give me grace so to trust Thee,
that with a bright spirit and a ready mind I may
endure trial or penance and resist temptation : for
Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

A Quiet Mind.

TEXT.—“*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is
stayed on Thee.*”—Is. xxvi. 3.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days
and forty nights : Give us grace to use such absti-
nence that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit,
we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteous-
ness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory,
who livest and reignest with the Father and the
Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

THE faithful cultivation of a cheerful spirit, based on trust in God, leads on to a quiet mind. No real resistance to evil is possible, no readiness to stand firm at time of temptation is conceivable, if the mind is allowed to be in a state of perturbation and unrest. "Fret not thyself," says the Psalmist truly, "else shalt thou be led to do evil." *Noli æmulari*. The quiet mind is necessary for fighting the battle against temptation.

It has been truly said that this is a motto to be remembered by any serious soul "when he contemplates what Bishop Butler calls 'the infinite disorders of the world.' . . . We may need it when honestly constructing a plain and intelligent theory of the things that most concern us and our work, and when the actual facts of History and Life give us trouble; for, whatever our theories, we shall be sure to meet with something inconvenient and perplexing which we could wish out of the way. We shall need it in our practical efforts after improvement; for, take what line we may, we shall be sure to meet with hindrances which we cannot account for, and checks which we had not expected." We must remember these things and keep a quiet mind. "They are not a palliative for faint-heartedness and hanging back, when it is plain that ventures must be made for Christ's sake." Still, they remind us that to deal with the difficulties of the world, or of our own souls, we need to cultivate interior calmness.

When we are face to face with evil, it is possible

for us, of course, quietly to acquiesce in it. This must be wrong. Again, we may meet evil with violence, complaining, "fretting"; with vehemence and noise and confused anger. If so, we probably lose ground, and do not exercise all the strength we might. There is another way. There is what has been called "a serene trust in the living God." If this be so, there is the calmness of a soul at peace. Men in fierce agitation or passion are in no condition to conduct difficult undertakings. They are apt to "lose their heads." Difficulties, to a brave and right-minded man, are made to be got over. To get over them requires thoughtfulness, exertion, a calm mind.

This calm of mind comes from God, but, like all God's gifts, we have to maintain it by faithfulness to His teaching. There are, as ever, two sides: there is God's gift and our effort. "Calmness" is said to be "a true proportion between tasks and powers." It is a real fact. It is not a mere feeling. It is a fact inwrought in the soul by God when the soul voluntarily and thoroughly surrenders to Him. It is not mere surface cheerfulness. The effort of Hope and of Cheerfulness in obedience to God's grace leads towards it. It is deep, and becomes deeper in the soul: an attitude towards things which does not take away the keenness of sorrow or trial, but supports the soul in these. Life is no unbroken monotony. It may be full of action, full of effort. It may be subject to great trials and intense sorrows, and yet below all an unrippled calm. So it was in the life of our Master; so it will be in ours, if we trust

in God. Then in the quietude of that interior peace we are able to be ready, without fluster or distraction, for the assaults of temptation.

Meditation.

IN life, often and often, have anxieties, sorrow, work, thrown my soul into a fretful disturbance. Again and again has temptation been yielded to from the hurry and storm of the soul. Ah ! my God, my Father, I have not trusted Thee. More and more will I look to Thee and rest in Thee. Thy Peace will keep me in the time of temptation.

*Calm in the depths of wind-swept sea,
The storm-rent heaven is calm above,
And calm, 'mid storms of life to me,
If I but trust a Father's Love.*

Prayer.

O LOVING Father, gracious and tender, give me grace to trust Thee utterly, and in all things, and keep me, according to Thy promise, in peace, that, resisting temptation, I may serve Thee with a quiet mind : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday after the First Sunday.

Morning.

A True Standard of Life.

TEXT.—“ *The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*”

—EPH. iv. 16.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

THE attractions which come with various temptations must be met by counter-attractions. This is a law of our being. We need not trouble ourselves as to the accusation that Christians do nothing for nothing ; that Christian right-doing looks to future reward. That, in a sense, is true, but in no sordid sense. Right-doing *is* its own reward, and must lead to reward. Justice would not otherwise be satisfied. So there *are*, to our nature, attractions

from temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. These are to be met by counter-attractions.

The Christian has an *ideal*. He places before him a standard. One way, and a powerful way, by which temptation is resisted is the constant fixing of the eye upon that higher standard. In this, if we are sincere Christians, we do but follow the law of our being. Man is, in truth, an artist working at himself. Every true artist has an *ideal*. Up to that he looks. There are varying ideals according to the work we have in hand. Youth has its ideal in physical strength; business men and "practical" men have their ideal in financial success. Intellectual men have their ideal in literary success. Philosophers, in theories of conduct and virtue. Christians have their ideal in Christ.

To meet serious temptations we need an ideal *that will last*. All things are passing; we are in perpetual changes. Opinions, fashions, habits change. We ourselves change. "Change upon change" is the order of mortal life. We need, for spiritual things, an ideal that will not change. Such a standard is the Christ of revelation. He was entirely human. He showed the noblest example of a life of Faith. He moved through this world doing "all things well," even in the common concerns of a humble calling, but with heart and principles always above the things of time. He lived a true life. Never did He play a part, or *pose* in a position, or "stand on stilts." Perfectly natural, perfectly real, He was serenely divine. He lived a life of love. It has been truly said that His intellectual conclusions, His

thoughts overflowed from the brain into the affections. It was a life of the most perfect manliness. There was no avoidance of taking trouble. There was no shirking of hard work or of fatigue. There was a high and noble independence, and with that the widest sympathy and most searching considerateness.

This ideal applies to all times. There may be any possible change of manners and customs among different peoples, but the principles of *that* life apply to all. Not only to all, but in all ways. His lofty self-mortification, His fastings, pains and prayers; His sociable considerateness for the society of His time; His capacity for dealing alike with the learned and ignorant, with the high-born and lowly, with the weak and the strong was unrivalled. He was at home *everywhere*, and so as a great *character* He applies to all people and to all time. Two things Christ and Christianity cannot coalesce with—Selfishness—Worldliness. There is another standard. Demas forsook the higher and went back to the lower. The *aim* of the Christian, if he is to resist temptation, must be “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

Meditation.

How often have I stood on lower levels. How often done good things from low motives. How often sought human praise, not the praise of God. How often taken lower ideals, mean and earthly standards. Hence so many falls! So many failures in things seem to be good and needful! Now, let

me turn from the world and see the one lofty and practical standard—the life of Christ.

*Jesus, Master, great ideal,
Let us all Thy glory see,
Strong and tender, true and manly,
Still through life I follow Thee.*

Prayer.

O FATHER of mercies, who hast not only sent Thy Son Jesus Christ to die on the Cross for us, but also to show us how to live : Give me grace to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life : through the same Jesus Christ. Amen.

Ebening.

Looking Upwards.

TEXT.—“*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.*”—PS. cxxi. 1.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

WE are all of us in some sense children of sorrow. We must all, sooner or later, face trials. How to deal with trials is one of the moral problems of human life. Some vigorously try to forget. Some rush into society. Some seek consolations in ways even less becoming. Some become cynical and hard. Vigour and manliness are not inconsistent with right dependence. Man *is* a dependent being. He depends upon God. It is a proof and test of right thought and self-respect, to look for help from above.

The reason is this. Life is a time for education. All that comes to us is for our training "if we are exercised thereby." What does God mean by it? What does He desire that I should learn? These are the questions we must learn to ask. When severe affliction reaches us—some terrible and painful illness, some heart-piercing death, some sudden weight of care in the thunderous sky of life—the clouds that bring no rain—some bitter parting with one dearer than life itself—the heart of those who can feel says, "I cannot bear it." "How *can* I bear it?" There is only one true answer. "God means something by it, and I am immeasurably dear to Him. I will look to Him." It is thus that experience becomes religious and "worketh Hope." To the Christian there is no unmeaning sorrow, no inexplicable anguish, no callous God, indifferent to His creatures' sufferings, but a Father who is training His children. The Highest and Holiest will help us if we will, and in allowing Him to do it we learn the holiest and highest lessons.

It is so in temptation. Every soul that serves God must suffer temptation. That is a law of life. There are many considerations of prudence which help men to resist temptation : and these considerations are not valueless. Still, whether it be a question of purity, or truth, or honesty, or duty of some humble kind, still duty—nothing is forcibly powerful but the real turning of the heart to God and His Righteousness. To learn and know that Right is Right, and must be obeyed, is to have a leverage against temptation ; and more, it is to enter on a path which leads to further light.

It is even more a need in sorrow. The well-intentioned but thoughtless point a soul in sorrow to comfort by saying "Time is the great Healer," "You will forget," or "Think of others, how *they* suffer."

" That loss is common does not make
My own less bitter, rather more ;
Too common ! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break."

And as to forgetting. This those who love truly cannot endure. Time may calm the first outbursts of grief. Work, not done to "distract" the mind, but to fulfil the calls of duty, deepens, sanctifies, steadies the sorrow. The soul can never be the same. The anguish must be there, but there is something nobler. It has "the comfort of God." It is learning a divine lesson. God, in whatever calamity, will comfort all who seek Him. He will not paralyze or destroy natural feeling—He will ennoble it. The soul will see its meaning in Him.

Meditation.

IN temptation how often have I turned in upon myself and failed. In sorrow, what danger of unworthily weakening of the soul. Upward and onward ! If it be with a soul in conflict, or a heart filled with tears, still my God, my Father, in Thee and by Thee is my help.

*Find in God unfailing comfort,
Mid the sorrow-laden years :
Though the soul be torn with conflict,
Though the heart be filled with tears.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, God of all comfort, give me grace in all temptation, trial, sorrow, with unfailing faith to seek my help from Thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday after the First Sunday.

Morning.

The Thought of Death.

TEXT.—“*O that they would be wise, that they would consider their latter end.*”—DEUT. xxii. 39.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights: Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

IN the battle of life, temptation has to be met and mastered as it was met and mastered by our Lord. His trust in His Father was supreme and unchanging. His Human Nature had, not to help it, but rather to add to His trial, the prevision of His terrible death. This was a trial He bore which we have not to bear. He clearly foresaw and knew, and deliberately entered upon, the struggle of a death

specially painful to a highly sensitive and perfect Human Nature.

The thought of death could only add to His sorrow. It could not help Him—as man—in life, except, indeed, by adding, if possible, a deeper spirit of self-surrender for us all. The thought of death may help us. There is a strong and religious way of looking forward to death. It is, indeed, the commonest thing in the world, and yet the most uncommon. It is experienced sooner or later by all, yet that experience, as we know, can come but once—once and no more. The certainties and uncertainties of death are rightly dwelt upon. The fact is certain. Certainly we shall die. The *when*, the *how*—these are shrouded in the clouds of the future. The more we try to serve God, the more we can leave these with Him. Still, “look to the end,” said the wise man, wisely. There is a truly religious help to be gained from the thought of death. Such help God gives us, and we are not to throw it from us.

The thought of death reminds us: (1) that we are now on trial. We are in a short waiting time called life. It is natural to us—and, in a way, not wrong—to take life for granted. When we are young the prospect seems illimitable, and so deep is man’s sense of undyingness that he cannot, if he would, always remember death. Still, to learn that we are “strangers and pilgrims” may nerve the will for vigorous work “while it is called ‘to-day,’” and bring to us, in a way to help us, the value of time. We are, it has been said by someone, running a race with death, and every moment it is gaining on us.

To think of this seriously is to learn more the value of time. But more than that. In the battle of life, the religious thought of death checks and stimulates. We may learn, in moments of trial and temptation, to ask the question, "What shall I think of it when I come to die?"

(2) Here we have great opportunities : (a) the opportunities of Prayer. No power given to man can, according to our Lord's teaching, compare to that. When tempted to slackness, coldness, irregularity in Prayer, the thought of how we shall think of this in our supreme moments comes in. (b) The same may be said of the great opportunities of offering "the Sacrifice of our Ransom," and of making our communions. If we think seriously of the *power* given us when "pleading the Lord's death till He come"; of the *strength* given to us in feeding upon His Body and Blood, how shall we wish not to have neglected these when we come to die ! (c) And in the constantly recurring temptations—the temptations to hasty words, to inaccurate statements, to unkind thoughts, to sloth, to evil imaginations or acts—what a power of restraint is found in the thought, "What shall I think of it when I come to die?"

Meditation.

THOUGHTLESSLY have I gone on in life, as if words and acts and choices of the will did not matter ! Thoughtlessly, too, as if this life were everything, and a scene of indefinite self-seeking ! Let me think more steadily of my limited time to live—the time to correct my faults, to repent of my sins, to do God's

will. In moments of temptation, may I have grace to think, "What shall I think of *this* when I come to die?"

*Life is battle. Trial follows
All that breathe our human breath ;
Think, in times of stress and trial,
Of the teaching power of Death.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who hast appointed to all men to die, give me grace to remember how short my time is, and so to use these years to Thy service that I may serve Thee hereafter for ever : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Practical View of Death.

TEXT.—"*After Death the Judgment.*"—HEB. ix. 27.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

MANKIND has always, probably, had a feeling that there must be some final decision as to the value of human life and human action. There have been whispers and surmises in the human soul, but it has been truly said that, while the earlier Scriptures tended to intensify this feeling and make more clear these whispers, it has been a very special office of the New Testament to make of them a precise and definite revelation.

We are told much of what our Lord's work as Man is; what His revelation of the Father; His tender works of sympathy and mercy; His atoning power, and the depth of soul and mystery presented to us on the Cross; but beyond this our Master so held up the judging of the world "as the last and supreme part of the work He was sent to do." In His most mysterious words of farewell before He departed from His life of humiliation here, He dwelt especially upon this. He refused on earth to be "a judge or divider"; He submitted to the providential arrangements for the government of the world in which He worked and lived; He left the family of man, under the guidance of God's Providence, to work out and arrange its ways of government, of administration, of national life; but to Himself He reserved the final and accurate judgment against which there could be no appeal.

Good and Evil, as they are found in our souls and in the world, are ever before the eye of God. They are, they must be, subjects of His "approval or con-

demnation." There is, however, something beyond that. There is, mysterious as it appears, a final review of all. "The secrets of all hearts shall be revealed." All that has ever been, all that is yet to be in this world, will pass, once for all, under the eye of an unerring Judge. This gives an added seriousness to Sin. It cannot escape detection and punishment at last. We know, it has been said, little beyond, and we can form no idea of the Future Life, being, as we are, creatures of sense and time, and time and sense being there no more; but we know that severe and solemn words have been spoken, that the curtain falls upon a Grave, an awful scene of Judgment, of Separation.

This gives a solemnity to life. This deepens the seriousness of Sin. This must give, by God's grace, an impetus to repentance, and to turning of our minds to higher and heavenly things. It is this which curbs rash judgments. We must, indeed, condemn what we know to be wrong, but the final and absolute condition and character of a sinner we dare not venture to appraise. The Son of Man will judge us and all. For His decision we must wait. It lifts us, if we are trying to do God's will, above the reach of mere human judgments. It teaches us to be exacting and unrelenting in our scrutiny of self, while we are charitable in our decisions as to others. It is well said, "Before we finally reach our rest, the goal of our existence, two things have to be gone through by all—one on this side of the grave, the other beyond it. But both are so inevitable, so real, so awful, that reasonable men may well think much

about them. . . . To die, to go through dying, to feel the sundering of all the ties of life, the extinction of all earthly hope, the parting from all that we have known and loved, will be awful enough . . . but there must further be . . . the scrutiny, the revealing, impossible to hush up or disguise, of our real selves, of what we are and have done."

Meditation.

I MUST be judged. It will be a judgment of *truth*. May it be, through my Saviour, one of mercy ! Let me not deceive myself *now*, I cannot *then*. I will try to see myself as I am. I will try to live and walk more in the light of that judgment. I will learn to be more afraid to sin, more earnest in repentance and prayer, more charitable in my judgments or others, more severe upon myself, to walk more in thought of the last decision.

*O Son of Mary, teach me,
Pity me, set me free
From sin. Thou art my Saviour,
And Thou my Judge shalt be.*

Prayer.

O God, who hast ordained that all shall be judged by Thy Son, give me grace so to repent, so to live, so by Thy grace to be helped and sanctified, that, by His merits, I may stand without reproach before the Son of Man : through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Saturday after the First Sunday.

Morning.

The Blessedness of Immortality.

TEXT—" *The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come unto Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*"

—IS. XXXV. 10.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

A practical belief in the immortality of the soul is one of the most moving springs of human action. It *must* make all the difference in life whether men really believe the present life is only a time of preparation, or whether it is everything we have to reckon with, and is bounded by the grave. There was a time when, as it has been well said, "the practical assumption of man's absolute mortality had posses-

sion of the ground." With all the whispers of the human conscience, with all the practical fancies about unseen powers, "what serious man, in his most serious thinking, ever dreamt of looking forward, in his real hopes and practical purposes, beyond what he could see and know of life?"

Christianity burst like a bolt from the blue on this state of prevailing opinion. St. Paul, especially, taught with boldness and distinctness on the whole subject. There were many and philosophical arguments which could be used in favour of the belief. Socrates had shown, "in the incomparable death scene of the Phædo, a heroic tenacity of faith"; but the Christian Church boldly asserted that the thing was proved by the evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to the examination of which it fearlessly challenged opponents.

The blessed power of this belief is far reaching to all who practically accept it. (1) It gives an exalted view of the dignity of human nature. A nature which is to have its indefinite force and action in succeeding years, is quite another thing than one which ends with the grave. (2) It encourages to hope and patience. No one can close the eyes to the vast inequalities, sorrows, difficulties, and, above all, injustices, in the present state of things. Such is a bewildering problem for those who do not believe in a future opportunity for correcting these defects. (3) If this life be all, there is a sad and unfathomable mystery as to undeveloped character, as to powers evidently formed for indefinite expansion, to which no chance of such expansion is afforded

now. We have the spectacle of vast intellect, which can only very partially realize its powers, or produce its effects in *Time*. We have the mysterious voices of Conscience, whose verdict awaits affirmation and enforcement beyond the grave. We have the beautiful and pathetic strength of loyal love—wasted, cheated, unmeaning, if there be no life beyond for its exercise. Man, great thinkers remind us, would be the most miserable of all animals if he be not immortal, for he *knows* his misery. The thought of immortality lifts all life to a higher level, and gives new meaning to all we do. There is a real reason for loyal love, for faithful affection, for unflagging effort, for self-denial, for self-sacrifice, for noble struggle—if indeed the results of this life are found beyond this life ; if character, with all that goes to form it, is the one thing that does not desert us beyond the grave.

Meditation.

To think that I am immortal, that I cannot die, how serious it makes my life and what comfort it brings. How much more grave appear my sins ! how much deeper must be my repentance ! I have comfort, O Lord, in sorrow and self-sacrifice and parting. This life is not all. I will be more serious and loving and watchful in this short trial time.

*“ Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal ;
' Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul.”*

Prayer.

O LORD of life, give us grace to realize the value of our trial time, and to remember the life to come. Help me, help us all, not to drift with the stream of mere worldliness or sensation, but to live as those who have to live and have to die, and yet must live again : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Hope of Glory.

TEXT.—“*Christ in you, the Hope of Glory.*”—COL. i. 27.

Collect.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights : Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

DEATH and judgment are very awful, and very solemn certainties. We are bound to think of them seriously and practically, because they *are* certainties and they affect us all. We must not make such thoughts weakening thoughts. Life is very awful,

but we have a duty to be strong. Such thoughts should make us more conscientious, more diligent, more watchful over ourselves, more gentle and charitable towards others. Such thoughts must not be allowed to paralyze or make us morbid. They are helps to resistance of temptation, to greater self-discipline, to watchfulness, to prayer.

Lest they overwhelm us by their real and terrible solemnity, God gives us the grace of Hope. The Bible, it has been truly said, is the book of Hope. It is always calling men to hope. It is steadily looking on. However it may deal with the Past, as a History or Treatise, or Poetry or Moral Instruction, it is persistently pointing to the Future. Everything it dwells upon it treats, as it treats the Past, "only as the ground and pledge of great things to come." Religion, as it comes to us in the Bible—notwithstanding all the revelation of such solemn certainties—impresses upon us the duty of Hope. There are many voices in Scripture, but it is true that above them all sounds loud and clear the Voice of Hope.

Now this helps us to treat rightly those grave and almost overwhelming thoughts. The thought of Death or of Judgment warns us against temptation and Sin. The Voice of Hope leads us to feel how temptation may be resisted, and Sin conquered. It raises the whole tone and character. We are beaten down and weakened when we give way to despondency or despair. We spring up strong by the power of Hope. It is an energy. It demands an existence. It is a noble moral response to grace. It is an act of courageous refusal to sink weakly down under

the pressure of downheartedness. It is that which makes God's loving promises of comfort and help real and powerful to the soul. It is by Hope that the consoling words of Scripture become to us, no longer notions or phrases, but "real and substantial things." There is much to beat us down. There is plenty of food for sorrowful thought. There is in this world, in our own sins, in our own characters, in the trials of life, enough, and more than enough, to depress, to paralyze, to empty of all vigour and perseverance. But "religious hope," it has been beautifully said, "is a deliberate counter-appeal to that mighty power which disposes with such mysterious influence of so much of human life." It is an exercise, it may well be, of self-mastery, to enlist imagination on the side of God, as the ally and enlightener and support of faith; to make it use its charms against dark dreams and terrors. Now this we know. When we speak of "Glory" we mean, in one word, the sum of beautiful and worthy things. We speak of God's attributes—His Justice, Mercy, Love, Goodness; when we think of *all*, as far as the mind *can* think, we say: "the Glory of God." Well, we must remember, "It is simply the most literal fact that God has set before us, in another state of being, the most wonderful future, which is within the certain reach of every single one of us: as much, as certainly within our reach, as anything that we know of, which we could obtain to-morrow. This is the plain, clear, certain promise, without which Christianity is a dream and delusion. The life and destiny of each individual man runs up to this; this

is what he was made for; for this he has been taught, and has received God's grace, and has been tried, and has played his part in the years of time." We are bound to face temptation, and all that weakens or pulls us down, by the Hope of Glory.

Meditation.

My temptations have been many, and often yielded to. My sins are many. Sorrows come in life, thick and fast. The body grows weaker; the heart faints. Hope after hope seems blown away. O my soul, withstand weakening thoughts. Hope is a duty. God gives thee—even to *thee*—the Hope of Glory. Look up; believe; trust; hope. It is a duty. It is also a strength and joy. God is thy Hope.

*Saddened by thy life's dark story,
Weakened, crushed by Sin and fear,
Still remains the Hope of Glory;
Trust, be strong: thy God is here.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who hast given to us, amidst all our sins, great and precious promises, give me true repentance for past sin; fill me with Thy divine Hope in the hour of temptation. Help me to be strong and stand. Give me grace to cling to Thy promises, and to live in the power of the Hope of Glory: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Sunday in Lent.

Morning.

Life a Time for Sanctification.

TEXT.—“*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.*”

—1 THESS. iv. 3.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

ALL things are changing. There is a ceaseless movement around us. Man seems at times as though he stood on the brink of a river which is flowing on. Much in this world is changing. What is most stable, most valuable, most delightful apparently, what seems to make life utterly joyful—art, literature, social intercourse, the play of the affections—also change. Young, we feel as if they were all. Passing onward, and feeling that we are growing nearer

to the Unseen, we long for something more. We look *through* them to what they mean, to what they are intended to teach. Man, too, changes, but still he feels that in the very innermost sanctuary of his being, in his very self, he is the same. He and One other are always face to face, or side by side. In one sense he is as much alone with God as 'if there were but two beings in the world—himself and God. He knows that no other can take his place. Why is he here? For what has God placed him in this trial scene? Why these joys, these sorrows, these gifts and graces, these warm affections, these desperate heartaches? We may feel that God's Will is, in many ways, obscure. This is clear, however: "The Will of God is our Sanctification." *Esse, non videri*: not merely to appear, but to be. This is what we are meant for in the highest things.

Life, then, is a schooltime. It is a time of education. One thing only can we take with us beyond the grave—that is the character that has here been formed. God's will is, that that character should be formed, for each of us in his own place, and according to his own gifts, to entire completeness, and on the noblest model.

The Christian Church teaches us that the office of God the Holy Ghost is to sanctify or make holy. Slowly, but surely, is that work performed in the souls of all who yield to His influence. Many are the varieties of holy characters fashioned by His loving inspiration, but of all this is true: the soul learns, and learns in a practical manner, its single individual being and responsibility face to face with God. To

feel and know that one is surely alone with God, loved and cared for by God ; to recognise and act upon the tie binding one to God, *i.e.*, to have a deliberate purpose to secure God—that is to be a religious man. It is in meditation, in prayer, in thought, that this lesson is learnt. And again, the Holy Spirit brings home the meaning and majesty of the Moral Law. To have deep in the heart the love of Right because it is Right ; to feel moral obligation—the power of “ I ought ”—is to be treading the path of sanctification. But the Holy Spirit goes deeper in His working than even this. He is “ the Loving Spirit ” that “ leads into the land of Righteousness.” The play of the affections is the deepest delight of life. The affections have to be sanctified. We know with earthly friends how deep, how lasting, love may be. So we may learn to love goodness, and to love God. We climb from and through pure and loyal earthly love to heavenly love. All noble thoughts, all high purposes, all pure affections, all strong acts of a resolute will—these are the gifts given to a soul that yields itself to the teachings of the Holy Spirit of God. Thus there is formed “ the real likeness, in thought, will, and character, to the goodness of Jesus Christ.” This for each of us, in his measure and degree, is the Will of God.

Meditation.

How little have I yielded to the holy inspirations of the “ Loving Spirit ” ! Yet every joy and every sorrow may bring me nearer to God. I would yield my will, my mind, my affections more and more to

Him. May Self fade away and God be all in all.
So may I grow in truth, in strength, in love, in holiness, and thus fulfil God's Holy Will.

*Every thought and wish, my Father,
Every love and hope of mine,
Cleanse and sanctify, that rather,
Not my will be done, but Thine.*

Prayer.

O LORD, Heavenly Father, whose Will it is that we should be sanctified, body, soul and spirit, give me grace, give us all grace, to yield ourselves to the influence of Thy Holy Spirit, and grow in holiness according to Thy will : for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

Life Guarded by a Sanctified Thought.

TEXT.—“*Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.*”—1 PET. iii. 15.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may

happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THERE is nothing more wonderful than the thought of the Unseen. We are here in a world of sense and time, perfectly marvellous in its variety and beauty, and study as we may, we know little of it. Besides this, we are certain—even common-sense teaches us—there is an unseen world. Whispers of it come to us by the strange thoughts and longings aroused in us by the sky and sea, by the starry heavens, or the beauty and grandeur of mountains and forests. We know that there is, and must be, another world. We know, too, that thousands and millions of our race have gone there : that soon *we* shall go. It must be close to us. The effect of it is felt in the soul. When at all awakened out of the surface dream of life we are conscious of it, with a strange sense of sadness and an unaccountable longing. The absence of *satisfying* power in anything that is given us here, the steady *longing on*, point to the same thing. Here we move about, seeing with human eyes—but it is the soul that sees ; touching with human hands—but it is the soul that touches ; speaking words to one another, but words are only symbols—the true converse is from soul to soul. We are children of the Unseen.

The unseen life was seen in this world in the person of Him who came and lived among men, and went through our experience, and opened up to us

in this life the character and ways of the unseen God. The unseen life was felt in this world, and *is* felt, by the Coming, by the Presence of the Holy Spirit of God. That Presence pervades the Church ; that Presence is felt in the soul. The power and work of that Presence are evident in the ways and words of men. Even with all the sins of Christendom, there are evident to all who think, modes of thought and feeling higher and nobler than before the descent of the Holy Ghost. The Unseen World has come into the Seen. Our thoughts should be lifted up by this. They may be if we yield to this higher influence. The Apostle St. Peter tells us of the force we may exert if we guard and keep the highest thought of the Unseen. As long as this world lasts the battle between Good and Evil must go on. Injury and wrong will be practised against those who serve God, those who are alive to the reality and obligations of the Unseen World. No real harm, nothing that can finally injure or taint the character can happen to those who are "followers of that which is good." And what is it which delivers from fear, and raises the whole nature? The answer is : loyalty to the Unseen ; guarding as sacred the thought of God. There may be an inner shrine in every human heart, a holy place dedicated to God, a Presence-chamber within which all things are holy. Evil is thrown off, resisted, overcome by the sacred thought of God. Martyrs have been subjected to cruelty and scorn, but they bore all things in the power of the thought of God. It is *that*, cherished and guarded in human thought, which restrains, disciplines, supports. We

must learn to make the thought of God our constant and most holy treasure, protection, and defence.

Meditation.

THE business of life, the voice of the world, has filled my heart and deafened my ears too much. How often have I failed in *recollection*; in the thought of God's Presence; in the awful sense of His love and nearness! O wavering and cowardly heart, keep, as the holiest treasure, the brightest light from the unseen world to which Thou belongest, to strengthen and steady and fill thee with courage—the thought of God.

*Let me fear Thee, let me love Thee,
Father, thus to conquer fear.
Nought on earth, O Lord, can move me,
When I feel that Thou art near.*

Prayer.

O LORD, Heavenly Father, who hast sent Thy dear Son to reveal Thee to us, Thy children, and who hast opened to us the unseen world in the coming of the Holy Ghost, give me grace, give us all grace, to live in the sense of the unseen, and in all danger and adversity to be sustained and strengthened by the thought of Thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after the Second Sunday.

Morning.

Life the Time to Sanctify the Body.

TEXT.—“*That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.*”—I THESS. iv. 4.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

LENT reminds us of the need of self-discipline. The spiritual life has its roots in the bodily life. In the body it is enshrined. No man is *only* soul. He is soul *and* body. The body, then, affects the soul. Everything that affects the body tells upon the soul. It follows that, if we strive after the highest things, we must treat the body in such a way as that pasture of our immortality should be treated.

The soul, then, can, in a sense, be trained through the body ; but as the body is part of ourselves, it must be held a sacred thing and treated, for its own sake as well as for the soul's sake, with wisdom and self-respect. Fasting, for instance, has always been a part of Christian self-discipline ; but fasting, in this sense, has not been the mere abstaining from food, but abstinence with a lofty and religious purpose. The duty laid upon us is co-operating with the will of God in the sanctification of the body.

Now Lent calls us, as the Bible does, as God's Word does, to sober thoughts, to special restraint from pleasure, to special discipline of desire. Indeed, this is essential for all true life. If, with seriousness and earnestness, we seek self-discipline and self-devotion, instead of self-pleasure and self-indulgence, it is because the higher life is, more and more, taking possession of the soul. All natural things, all the little events and matters which are concerned with every-day life, may and ought to lead to spiritual results. The spiritual things have their root in the natural. If the natural leads on to higher consequences in spiritual life, it does what it ought to do.

Men have felt this, but the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" have been strong forces, and in fallen nature had to be curbed. Some have fallen so far that they have forgotten the dignity of the body, and rushed into violent self-indulgence, by way of treating the body as of no account. Others have felt the need of governing the body, and rushed into the opposite extreme of violent

asceticism. This is better far than the former ; but Christianity points to those high thoughts of the sacredness of the body, which are inconsistent with either extremes.

To sanctify the body is : (1), to *train* it, so that it may readily respond to the higher purposes and requirements of the soul. Fallen nature has in it the elements of confusion, and body as well as soul must be trained into holy *habits* which go to form *character*. For instance, bodily weariness must not be allowed to pass into the Sin of Sloth. The need of sufficient sleep must not be allowed to pass into laziness. Prayer must be recognised as the highest energy of man ; his gravest duty, his greatest privilege ; and the bowed head and the bended knees are not unimportant. The body helps the soul. If we worship God “in spirit and in reality,” the soul must be in solemn communion with God, and the body must be trained to assist and obey the soul ; and (2), therefore, there is a need for *discipline* of the body. Bodily desires, become unregulated through sin, must be checked and crossed. Self-denial in bodily things, rising out of the soul’s longing for God, becomes at last the habit of a simple and faithful life, and the body and soul become in peaceful union by the sanctifying of both to God’s glory.

Meditation.

How often has mere bodily desire guided and governed my life ! God’s will points to temperance, discipline, self-restraint. Following that will, the body itself becomes hallowed. Ah ! that I may have

grace to think noble thoughts, and restrain all rebellious desires, that so the body may be the faithful helper of the soul. Let me now place a watch upon my senses—those avenues to the soul—lest I sin.

*When the Flesh is strong and round us
All its poisonous vapours roll,
By Thy sacred Body broken,
Mighty Master, save the Soul.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, who willest not that any should perish, but that all should seek Thee and be saved, and who knowest us to be set in the midst of many and great dangers, give us grace so to use all natural powers and gifts of body, that body and soul may be saved in the day of redemption : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

The Glorious Destiny of the Sanctified Body.

TEXT.—“ *He shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be sanctified like unto the body of His Glory.*”—PHIL. iii. 21.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both out-

wardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

IF Christianity startled the world by its positive teaching of immortality, it spoke in still more startling accents when it spoke of the resurrection of the body. What that can exactly mean we are unable to imagine. We know, however, that there is some deep mystery as to the identity of the human body, which, like all mysteries, passes our comprehension. The regular processes of the body are well known to scientific research. At some point or other, however—we know not how—consciousness comes in and acts upon the machinery of the brain. The union of the natural and the spiritual is a profound mystery. St. Paul, however, goes further still, and tells us dogmatically and directly, “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” We know also that what we each of us call *our* hand or foot, or any part of our body, was *ours* in our early days, as *ours* now. Yet probably no single particle of matter remains in them that was there in infancy. Still they have always been *ours*. The Bible and the Church do not, indeed, speak of particles of matter, but they do speak of the resurrection of the body. If we take them as our guides, we must believe in this in some sense. Our Lord has thrown some light upon this mysterious

subject by His own action in His resurrection body. With no open door for the entrance of a material body, He passed into the room where His disciples were assembled. He ate before them: He warned them against imagining that He was a mere spirit, and spoke of having flesh and bones. He vanished out of their sight, acting, evidently, not according to the laws of a material body. His appearances and disappearances on several occasions are carefully recorded. In this way He was seen, besides others, by over five hundred at once. So great a number could not all be deceived, and St. Paul was able to appeal to half of these, still living some thirty years after, in evidence of the Resurrection.

We Christians, therefore, believe that as the Eternal Son appeared on earth in His "body of humiliation," so He appeared, after His Resurrection, in "the body of His glory."

Further, in the mystery of the Holy Sacrament, we know that under the form of Bread and Wine our Lord gives to His people His Body and Blood. This is, of course, a real presence of Christ's Humanity and Divinity, but it, as it is real, so it is "after a heavenly and spiritual manner." We are face to face with an awful mystery, and a mysterious revelation. Now the dignity and wonder of the human body is this—it is revealed to us plainly that our "body of humiliation" shall be hereafter "changed," and "fashioned like unto the body of His glory." We look forward to a glorious destiny of the body, not merely of the soul. We ourselves, in our *entire* nature, are to be made like unto Him

who is our model and ideal. Surely Christians must treat a body with such a destiny with reverence and care. Indeed, the corporal works of mercy so commended by Christianity take much of their meaning and value from this.

Meditation.

I MUST remember the dignity of that body which will be my companion in eternity. I must respect the bodies of others—so sacred by the power of Christ. Purity, modesty, discipline, mercy, care—these come to me as duties in things of the body that shall be changed and glorified. How blessed must be the sacramental food by which He “cleanses our bodies by His sacred Body, and washes our souls by His precious Blood.”

*Labouring and heavy laden,
Wanting strength in time of need ;
Fainting on the way from hunger,
Bread of Life on Thee we feed.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, who hast revealed to us by Thy dear son the dignity and destiny of our bodies, and who feedest us on His sacred Body and Blood, give us grace to live in purity and self-discipline, and to present our bodies a living sacrifice unto Thee : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Tuesday after the Second Sunday.

Morning.

Life a Serious Battle.

TEXT.—“*For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*”

—EPHES. vi. 12.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

IT is well, in a solemn time like Lent, to remember that life is a battle. Good and evil in this world are in conflict, and we must take sides and fill our own places. That battle rages, and we forget it. Yet all day long choices are being made on which much depends. For choice means moral power or moral weakness. We are on our trial whether or not we fail and flinch : so stand firm, advance, and have

victory. The forces are great against us, and, too often, we have wantons in the citadel in our infirm or perverted wills. The forces with us are, however, still more powerful if only we care to use them and to take the right side.

Our danger is, and in this serious season we should look to it, that we may not realise enough the seriousness of the battle. It is serious.

(1) On our fighting or yielding depends the cast of our character. Acts make habits, habits make character. Character is everything. Our whole cast and tone of mind and thought is being formed. It is that which we have, and that only, as our possession when we come to die. It is serious to remember how short life is, and how in its changes and vicissitudes, every day affords us an opportunity to form that which must be ourselves for ever.

(2) And then, all this will be seen to in very truth; we *know* that soon there will come to each of us the unique catastrophe of Death. There will then be a break up of all that is familiar and usual in this present scene, and in our connection with it. There will be another great catastrophe. Of that, Holy Scripture and Christ Himself have told us explicitly. Imagination fails us to picture the scene, but our method of fighting and its results will be tested by an unerring Judge. He has had entire experience. He has been and will then be, like ourselves, a Man. The Representative Man will judge man. His love has been unbounded. To guide and help us in the battle He died in pain and shame. He taught what we should fight for, what abandon. He will decide,

with infallible wisdom, with boundless mercy, but with unflinching justice, how we have borne ourselves in the struggle. On His decision all our future will turn. He will judge, it is truly said, according to "that law of righteousness, truth and mercy which here is both acknowledged and disobeyed." We may tremble, when we think of the utterly wicked—the traitors, the slanderers, the spies and seducers who have taken the side of Evil—but we must also fear for the careless, the cold, the indifferent, the slack, the unreal, neglecting their duties in the fierce battle of life. We must arouse ourselves, by grace, to think of what a serious conflict we are engaged in, and with what serious issues.

Meditation.

How slack and dreamy and self-pleasing have I been in the battle of life ! Let me arouse myself and see, with the eye of faith, underneath the smooth appearance of things, the hosts of Evil attacking me and all. Fight, O my soul, for the battle is serious. Fight for Truth, Purity, Righteousness ; remember the reality of the struggle, and the greatness of the consequences.

*Awake ! Fight ! for the battle is raging,
Against darkness and wickedness, fight ;
For the Lord shall punish the Evil,
The Lord shall reward the Right.*

Prayer.

O GOD of truth and light, arouse me from unreal dreams ; keep me from all self-deceiving ; enlighten

my mind to see the deadliness of the forces of Evil ; give me grace to lay to heart the seriousness of my conflict, and grant me victory, of Thy mercy : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

Life is a Battle to the End.

TEXT.—“ *Fight the good fight of faith ; lay hold on eternal life.*”

—I TIM. vi. 12.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

ST. PAUL assures us that in the constant temptations which beset human life, and in the opportunities of choice of good or evil, there are opposed to us unseen powers. Why their existence is permitted in the world of a good God we need not ask. The mystery of the existence of evil is a mystery unfathomable to us with our present powers. Wickedness, however, utter badness, assisted and reinforced by personal Beings of depraved will, has to be fought

with now. Of these beings, it has been truly said, that "though they may be different from us in the conditions of their life, they belong to the same great moral system to which we belong." To do righteousness, however tempted to act wrongly, is to fight truly against these unseen powers.

Times of slackness, of carelessness, of materialism, have closed our eyes to the existence and energy of unseen spiritual forces. Still, there they are, and with them—unless we have fallen before them, or surrendered to them—we are in conflict. This fight is to continue to the end. We walk by Faith, not by sight, and this is the "good fight of Faith." Here our Faith is to be tried. Life, at longest, is short for the struggle for goodness. The thing to pray for is the grace of perseverance. As Humility is at the foundation of the spiritual life, so Perseverance is its crown. "He that persevereth to the end, the same shall be saved." There are many charges in this battle. If in one point we succeed, the enemy attacks us on the other. If we are successful and think ourselves safe, temptation comes with redoubled force and tries us again.

None the less, there are encouragements. If only we are faithful, in the end we *must* win. Then again, if we put on "the armour of God" the enemy *cannot* overcome us. We are on the winning side. Goodness must triumph in the end. We have a leader who loves us and whom we can trust. He can never fail us; if we lift our hearts to Him, if we follow where He leads, we cannot go wrong. There must be dark days, there are sure to be dark hours for all

of us, but if we walk by Faith, and keep near to God in Prayer, we come out again into the sunshine, and we have times again of rest and peace. The truth is, what we must rouse ourselves to is a brave and earnest life, a life in which, however grave be the appearance of things, we persevere in trust in God, in use of means of grace, in faithful prayer.

The spirit of prayer must enter our life, so that the soul is ever looking up. In the midst of absorbing occupation, the upward eye and the word of prayer bring comfort and strength. In the midst of struggle against what is wrong, interior peace increases. "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give in."

Meditation.

ASSURE thyself, O my soul, of alertness and readiness to fight on. Often have I fainted, failed, given in, but God has helped me. In Him will I trust, to Him will I cry. This evil habit, or ungodly temper, or slothful way shall not conquer. My God, by Thy help, I will try again.

*Onward, onward to the battle,
Still Thy Lord is leading on ;
Dark the night, severe the struggle,
Comes the victory, breaks the dawn.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, I am weak and the enemy is strong, give me grace to try again in fighting with evil : give me strength to persevere to the end : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Wednesday after the Second Sunday.

Morning.

Life a Time to Sanctify Natural Energies.

TEXT.—“*I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless.*”—1 THESS. v. 23.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

NATURE is full of beauty. It is possible, indeed, to discover its darker side, for a darker side it has. Still, there is so much beauty in the ordinary sights and sounds of Nature—the skies, the clouds, the sea, the woods, the streams—that in it we may learn much of God. It is the same with Man. There is the dark and the sad side, but there is a side of great beauty. Childhood and youth appeal to us by their

freshness and their strength. And all our natural energies have about them something strong, fascinating, even beautiful. We know little of the mystery of our lives, but we do know that "what we are here is but a little fragment of what we are made for." Now, we all have some *natural energies*. There is the soul and the body as well as the spirit. These are to be sanctified and dedicated to God. If we are Christians we believe that Christ has raised our Human Nature, that He has ennobled it by taking it upon Himself and then carrying it up to God, to lead us upward in all our energies. Our natural energies are powers of Life. If we think of what we mean by Life, if our minds are allowed to rest on that which we cannot, indeed, define, but whose existence we are sure of in ourselves and by the signs of it around us—we see that all that belongs to it is meant to be glorious, to be raised, and ennobled, and sanctified, and led to God. For God alone can give Life.

We may do this in many ways. "Animal spirits," for instance, are beautiful, especially in the young. They have to be disciplined. A sort of religion or cult almost grows up round the heroes of muscular power among the young. Why should this not be disciplined and sanctified, so as not to become brutal, but rather the expression of real manliness and strength? There is nothing beautiful in cowardice, unmanliness, slackness, and sloth. There is nothing beautiful in brutality or a sort of selfish animal self-indulgence. There *is* something beautiful in strength and vigour carefully disciplined and nobly used.

Or take, again, intellectual energy. Nothing can be more fruitful of evil, nothing more powerful for good. The responsibility of one with intellectual gifts, who uses them to shake the faith or destroy the peace and light of souls, is fearful; but how blessed when minds of power are exerted to spread truth and to give comfort and guidance to those who need. It has been said that devotion to various activities may become a positive religion, *i.e.*, "that which a man's heart owns to as most mighty and most irresistible in all things round him." These various energies of body, or mind, or taste, or feeling may *absorb* the interest of the life. That is a danger. God must be supreme. Nothing can *satisfy* the soul but that which is eternal. We must take care to have within the heart that which alone can fascinate and entrance all our real and higher selves. Everything is sanctified by the fear and love of God. There is no department of life that may not be made noble and beautiful by that genuine spirit of humility and trustfulness which best becomes the Creature who, in fact, depends for all things upon the Creator.

Meditation.

How often have I taken for granted any powers in my nature as being *mine*, and to be used as may please *me*! All are of Thee, O God. Mind and body, thought and strength, all the energies of life—let me use them in the faith and fear and to the glory of Him who gives them all. This must be by wrapping them all round with prayer and recollection of the presence of God.

*Life and all its myriad powers,
Great or humble though they be,
Still are Thine, and only hallowed,
Used, O Lord of Life, for Thee.*

Prayer.

O LORD and Giver of Life, help us to know and feel that all our gifts and energies are to be consecrated to Thy service, and used for Thy Glory : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

Life a Time to Sanctify Thought.

TEXT.—“ *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; . . . think on these things.* ”—PHIL. iv. 8.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE thoughts of a man are his closest possession. We live, indeed, in a social world, and have constant

intercourse one with another ; but the vast extent of life is lived alone, and our intercourse is with our own thoughts. There is a thoughtless way of supposing that we have no power over our own thoughts. One can scarcely imagine, it has been truly said, "any thinking man, who holds himself responsible for anything, seriously accepting the shallow phrase, which sometimes meets us, that we are not responsible for what we think and believe and hold : as if, supposing a man to think at all, he cannot help what his thinking leads him to believe ; as if our thoughts and our belief were the mechanical, necessary, blind result of certain argumentative processes, which, once set going, produce their inevitable conclusions, as the printing machine gives off the impressions of the types with which it is charged. The living mind does not so act. No one . . . who honestly reviews his own history, and examines into the foundations of his own principles of life, can doubt that he has had, at least, a great deal to do with setting up the types. The way and direction we choose to look make a great difference in what we see and what we do not see . . . *we may welcome thoughts or escape from them* ; impressions which we cannot help receiving we may cherish and deepen, or we may leave to be effaced. We may live in an atmosphere where one class of ideas, one class of assumptions and maxims, are perpetually at hand or are perpetually away ; the books we read, the trains of thought we follow, the authorities which we habitually defer to, with all their subtle, insensible, undefinable hold on us, are very much matters of our choice. If we think in one

way rather than another, we have most of us done a good deal to put ourselves in the way of so thinking. . . . *On the whole, the government of our own minds is in our own hands.* That great instrument of Reason given to us, we can play on it much as we will, well or ill, wisely or foolishly ; and the result is the complex fabric of habitual thought, opinion, conviction, faith, on which we have to live."

It is true. True, it may be specially of the formation of convictions and beliefs, but true of all action of the mind. Now, if the character has to be formed for Eternity, if the possibilities of Good and of Evil are, as they are, to each of us immeasurable, unfathomable, nothing is more important than the sanctification of thought. This St. Paul sees and teaches. The mind must be made to obey the will ; the will must be upright, and inspired and guided by grace. We must fasten the mind to all that is noblest, and turn swiftly from all that is base. Truth—the desire to speak, know, act the truth—must be the basis of character. Honesty, probity, directness must overcome all crookedness and shiftiness. Justice must conquer prejudice and partisanship. Purity must be clung to, and impurity turned from quickly *in thought*, if the life is to be godly and self-commanding. All that is good, beautiful, noble and holy must be the habitual objects of a mind set on higher things.

Meditation.

OFTEN at random have my thoughts wandered. Evil curiosity rather than enthusiasm for goodness

have guided and governed them. How many stains, hence, on mind and imagination! I must arouse myself and *rule* my thoughts—turning swiftly from what is evil, holding firmly to what is good.

*Swiftly moves the thought and fancy,
Wayward on an evil track :
Lord of Lowliness and Goodness,
Check them, hold them, lead them back.*

Prayer.

O FATHER, we are not sufficient of ourselves to *think* anything as of ourselves : give me grace to rule my thoughts according to Thy holy law : for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord. Amen.

Thursday after the Second Sunday.

Morning.

Life a Time for Training in Worship.

TEXT.—“*True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.*”—ST. JOHN iv. 23.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

WORSHIP is the poetry of Religion. It has about it that halo of mysterious splendour, that deep feeling, not to be put into words, which comes in music : that exalted thought which can only find expression in poetry. It means more than Prayer, Thanksgiving, Praise. There is less of Self in it. It includes them all. “The world,” it has been well said, “is forwarded by having its attention fixed on the best things.” Again, it has been said, “Poetry

is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth." That is true of Worship. Words cannot fully express what the heart says in Worship. We cannot always say exactly *why* a character attracts or holds us. Secret voices pass from soul to soul,

" Without asking *wherefore*
I worship Thee so."

That is the language of real, deep, noble affection.

Worship is the homage of the whole being, the active homage, in the presence of the Holiest and the Noblest. It is no feeble or vague or shadowy sentiment. It is the most real of all things. "Out of heart" with itself, its weaknesses and sins, the whole being is lost in the sense of utter goodness, and prostrate before unapproachable yet fascinating Holiness.

However mystical and wonderful are the forces of poetry, in them are broad, true, clear, definite ideas. It has been well said—something of this sort, and we feel *this* to be at the root of real worship—that in all nobility of character there is reverence. The higher we grow in noble thoughts and purposes, the more are we drawn in homage to those who are above us. And there is no noble power, or faculty, or attainment which does not become nobler by being offered to, dedicated to, some subject deserving of it.

In this way it is that the young grow in strength and beauty of character as they learn reverence. A young soul without reverence is a stunted soul, for

it cannot *see* facts. Higher than it there are, who *deserve* reverences, for

“We still must love the highest when we see it.”

Now, life is meant to train us in that real reverence and worship which are essential to the truth and full development of our character. This is one of the chief uses of a good home. It is there we learn to look up to those who, in love, self-denial, knowledge, bring to us our first ideas of a higher wisdom. This is one of the great works of the Church. In her services, when well-ordered and reverent, we are taught not to seek for good to ourselves, not so much to “get good,” as to lose ourselves in the Love and Greatness of God. This is a season for banishing self-assertion, and for learning humility of body and soul in the presence of the Highest. This is a season for cultivating and clinging to holy habits of reverence in mind and body. This is one of the great teachings of life. If we are patient, thoughtful, humble, we have to sink self more and more, and to admire goodness. This we are being trained to, for this must be the attitude of mind in Heaven, when we have the joy of “knowing as we are known.”

Meditation.

How often has Pride blinded my eyes to the nobility of others! How often in Prayer, in the services of the Church, have I failed to remember, or to try to realise, the greatness and nearness of God! Be more thoughtful, O my soul, more silent, before

that Divine Majesty. Repent of thy pride. Learn to be reverent to all that is good and glorious, to all that is of God.

*Bend my soul in deep reflection,
Move my feet, with reverence shod;
Goodness, Beauty, Truth, Perfection,
Worship in the Living God.*

Prayer.

O GOD, most Holy, give me a seeing eye and a reverent mind, that learning to worship Thee here on earth, I may behold and worship Thee hereafter with joy unspeakable in Heaven: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

Life a Time for Dedicating all to God.

TEXT.—“*All things come of Thee, and of Thine own do we give Thee.*”—1 CHRON. xxix. 14.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which

may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

SELF-DEDICATION is the ennobling of life. Men truly rise to their higher selves when they dedicate themselves or their work to someone else. A great love gives life, impetus, nobility to common work. The man who has volunteered for his country may have weary and trying work to do, but it is all raised to a higher level. Almost unconsciously, that work goes on as if there were nothing else to do, as if it were common work ; but in the inner sanctuary of the soul there is a sense of those dear and sacred who recognise and remember the high purpose, to whom, with whatever sorrow, there is joy at faithfulness. The son who earns his first wage, and brings it to his father with joy, because he loves him and his thoughts and teachings have helped to inspire him, has ennobled his labour. The common toil of every day, which has to be done apparently as a matter of course, is raised to high moral and spiritual value by the manly love for wife, for child, for the nearest and dearest, perhaps far away. The nobler a life is, the more it longs to dedicate itself to others. The more of self-dedication there is, the nobler life becomes. Indeed, any life sinks down to mere routine, or paralysing selfishness, if it is not in some way dedicated to ends, to persons, beyond itself.

This is a use of life. By this we climb to that higher dedication which we are here to learn. We are born into a very awful, a very mysterious world.

The more we think of what life is, of what it may mean, the more, it has been truly said, we reverence Him who is the source and giver of it. As time goes on, if we try to think and act as religious men, we are more deeply conscious of the marvellous and watchful Providence of God, and of the strength and minuteness of His care for us. This, indeed, inspires us to prayer and trust, but it inspires us with the spirit of self-dedication. The higher a soul rises, the nobler its aims and purposes, the more it realises that *all* comes of God. The life, the health, the strength, the interests, the means of usefulness, the dear objects of our affection, the things which appear to make life worth living—*all*, we feel, come from Him. What are called “secondary causes” are soon seen to be the modes of working of Him “who giveth all.” It is the power of religion to bear this in upon the soul. Many things in the world—common duties, and sordid cares—are apt to blind us to all this. Alone, in times of secret thought, in times of prayer ; with others, in time of united worship, the sense of this comes in strongly upon the soul. The more we feel this, the more holy, serious, high-toned does life become. Love is self-dedication. Even here for one really loved we would do or suffer anything ; and Love in Heaven is God. We learn thus in life how to prepare for Heaven.

The Christian Religion is meant to bring home to us the devotion and self-dedication of Christ. That is *the* motive. Once, by grace, realise that our noblest readiness to devote ourselves, our all, for others is a faint shadow of Christ’s feeling and acts for us,

then "the love of Christ" will constrain us. In it we shall read the Father's thought for us, and more, learn that not to have but to give, not to clutch for ourselves but to surrender for others, not to please self but to dedicate all for others, for goodness, for God, is the training for the work beyond the grave.

Meditation.

SELFISHNESS and self-seeking have too often ruled my life. From them always comes Sin. What loving friends, what self-sacrificing dear ones, God has given me to teach me the work of a noble life. Oh ! to think less of self, more of others, to spend and be spent for God ! This is the Christian joy and calling now. Heavenly Father, make it mine !

*Seek not self, but still be giving,
Offer all to One above ;
Noble love, that is true living ;
All true life is noble love.*

Prayer.

O LORD and Heavenly Father, who givest all, richly hast Thou poured Thy blessings on me. Give me grace to dedicate myself and all I have to Thee.

Friday after the Second Sunday.

Morning.

Life a Time for Sanctifying Care.

TEXT.—“*Cast all your Care upon Him ; for He careth for you.*”

—1 PET. v. 7.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

LIFE for many is full of Care. Care, as we know it, has much which makes it heavy and oppressive. It has none of the poetry of sorrow. It darkens life without adding any mystery or beauty to it. It is made of clouds which bring no rain. There are the cares of poverty, the cares and anxieties which inevitably come as years go on from the circumstances which surround each of us. Man is not the mere puppet of circumstance. Man has a will and

power of choice of his own. None the less, much depends upon circumstances, and "over these," as we commonly say, "very often he has little or no control." We are all affected by each other's actions, and there is much in the action of others which necessarily, in this sad world, tends to load us with a weight of Care.

It is not merely our feeling about things; it is things themselves and in themselves with which we have to do. How are we to act towards that which is often crushing, always oppressive? There is a natural inclination to give way to worry and impatience and fretfulness. This can only make Care worse and more oppressive. For this is waste of energy, all of which is needed for the wise conduct of life. "Fret not thyself," says the Psalmist, "else shalt thou be led to do evil." Fretting in that sense is, at best, weakness, and is apt to pass into sin. It only adds to the weight of Care. Nothing is ever gained by weakness. We must try to be strong.

The only way is the way pointed out by the Apostle. We must take God into our secret. It is a great mystery, but it is true that God wills that we should consult Him in all things. "Men ought always to pray," was our Lord's teaching, "and never give in." It seems at times incredible that what seem the trifling matters of every day—the things which rest, indeed, with heavy weight upon the heart—should be matters of interest to the Eternal. God's greatness and love, however, are not merely shown in what we call *great* things. "He

hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek." "The very hairs of your head," said our Lord, "are all numbered." God *does* "care for us." We have a right to think of a fatherly considerateness and tenderness above and around us. As a father loves his children, cares for them, "pitieth" them, "so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him." Our High Priest "can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We may "come boldly to the throne of grace"; we may, if we will, "find grace to help in time of need." This, certainly, lightens the weight of Care; and what would be otherwise oppressive and overwhelming becomes, when our Father in Heaven is made our confidant, bearable and a blessing. Care, religiously borne, educates, strengthens, sanctifies character.

Meditation.

I HAVE had cares. Again and again I have borne them badly, with fretfulness, self-worrying, complaining. How heavy they have become in consequence! Double the weight! Let me lift up my heart in faith, and pour out my trouble to my Father in Heaven. He will help me, and bless the trial, for He careth for me.

*In the stress of Life's sad struggle
Comes the heavy weight of Care;
Ah! my soul, with faith look upwards,
God will help thee all to bear.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who seest us to be tried by so many and great trials that we are not able of ourselves to help ourselves, grant us Thy loving help, that we may bear all faithfully and bravely, feeling Thy strength in time of need : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

Life a Time for Sanctifying Sorrow.

TEXT.—“ *I found trouble and sorrow ; and I called upon the name of the Lord.*”—Ps. cxvi. 3.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

CARE is oppressive. Sorrow is cutting. Nothing so terrible as a real heartache. Yet, when we look at life, we cannot, wisely, say that all is sad. There are—it is truly said—three ways of looking at life. (1) The way of the Optimist. He shuts his eyes to

facts, and imagines that he does away with them by not seeing them. This is, to him, the best possible world. Men rarely feel like this unless they are in special circumstances—an easy income, good health, either a cold nature or things so turning out that they have never known a heartache. (2) There are the Pessimists. They refuse to see any light. Life, in their eyes, is overspread with clouds. There is nothing, to their minds, but the triumph of Evil. All things are sad and bad. (3) And then there is the Christian. He says that both these views are false views. Life is a very mixed scene. There is much joy, but there is much sorrow. On the whole, the sorrow seems to predominate.

“Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.”

Our Lord Himself is called “the Man of Sorrows.” Now, Christianity shows that sorrow has its uses. We have the power, from Religion, to sanctify sorrow. It is remarkable how completely, while recording sorrow, the Bible is a book of Hope. It is also striking how our Lord, notwithstanding His sorrowful life, always points onward, is always encouraging to Hope. From the few hints we have of His early years, there must have been joy then. There must have been a healthy, happy boyhood, and a mind eager for intercourse with others, and a heart full of sympathy. He constantly entered into others’ sorrows and turned them into joy. No one more entirely realised the sadness of one whom sin had conquered like the Magdalene, or the bitterness

of bereavement, as in the case of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. If the New Testament is stern—as it certainly is in treating unrepented sin—it is also full of tenderness and full of hope. It is always turning sorrow into joy. It is foolish to deny the poignancy of sorrow. Yet if we ask for grace to learn Submission, to look through and beyond the sorrow to the glorious promises of God, to pray to see the meaning of it, and to act upon it, then sorrow does not cease to be sorrow, but we are not alone in it : God is with us ; we are sure there is a good meaning in it, to which it leads on. “ Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” In sorrow we know we have the sympathy of Christ. He knew the bitterness of parting, and the desolation of dark hours. We must tell Him of our sorrows and ask Him to support and teach us. For a Christian, sorrow must end in joy. The time is coming when sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

Meditation.

OH ! for a faith to look upward in sorrow. Oh ! for real loving resignation to the Will of God. In bitter moments of trial, I have not thrown my mind and heart enough on the sympathies of Jesus. Let me *exert* myself healthfully to hope in God.

*Bring thy sorrow to thy Saviour,
Restless heart, He soothes to sleep ;
He who wept o'er Lazarus' death-place,
Helps and feels for all who weep.*

Prayer.

O LORD, who knowest us to be subject to sorrow, give us such faith in Thee and resignation to Thy holy Will that Hope may never fail us, and our sorrow be turned into joy : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday after the Second Sunday.

Morning.

Life a Time to Sanctify Pain.

TEXT.—“*That I may know . . . the fellowship of His Sufferings.*”—PHIL. iii. 10.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

PAIN, all agree, is the deepest thing in life. It is one of those fundamental mysteries which we cannot go behind. Pain accompanies our entrance into this world, and, for the most part, it is with us when we are called away. It has been said truly that the strangest thing in pain is that that whole system of *feeling*, that whole mechanism so marvellous for producing pleasure, seems to turn back upon us and attack us, and becomes the power and instrument of Pain. Strange creatures that we are, we have ter-

rible capacities for pain. As the world is full of sound, so is it full of pain. We are sure, as we look around, that this must be by the intrusion of an alien force into the kingdom of the good God. It has been noted how marvellously, side by side with pain, as with all kinds of trial and sorrow, there is ever some corresponding alleviation. If many things are wrong in this world "the way of improvement is still an unforfeited possession." God has, as time goes on, taught man many ways of alleviating pain. Still, pain is an awful mystery. We see and know, however, that by the mighty power of grace, pain also may be sanctified. We cannot doubt that suffering patiently borne fortifies and develops character.

Suffering *in itself* may not do this. It may even, we know, harden and injure. It may make men bitter, complaining, discontented. But grace can do all things. Life is given, among other uses, as a time to sanctify pain.

How can we turn so terrible an enemy into a friend? It can only be by God's help. "My heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." When things are darkest God will, if we seek it, give us courage, and the fortitude required to bear pain becomes a force in the character. Prayer, then, in this, as in all things, is the power to be excited. And more : looking on in life, we may allow our minds to dwell upon the dreadful trials, the sharp sufferings, the deep sorrows which lie before us. We do not know what may come—we are in a world of great mystery and awfulness, and we are creatures capable of severe suffer-

ing. This thought, when it takes possession of us, is paralysing. It fills us with unnamed fears. "Imagination," it has been well said, "is the home of fear." How is such fear cast out, so as not to paralyse? How may we prepare for the suffering that may lie before us, so that if and when it comes it may be sanctified? The answer is by cultivating the habit of trust in God. He watches over and leads those who trust Him, and "He never leads them wrong." It is by the habit of trust in Him, formed in the lighter days of life, that we are prepared to meet with resolution and turn to good account the dark and painful days of life.

Meditation.

How full of fear have I been! How impatient of trial and suffering! I deserve pain for my many sins. My sufferings, when they come, may be sanctified and blest, and made means of strength if, in my days of ease or peace, I have sought and trusted God.

*Saviour, who for me a sinner,
Suffered, sorrowed, and wast slain,
Bind me to Thee, make me trust Thee,
Bless to me all grief and pain.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, who for our sake didst send Thy dear Son to die for us on the Cross, and who didst make Him perfect through suffering, give us grace to bear patiently any pain laid upon us, and, in

all suffering and sorrow, to look to Thee and trust in Thee, and so to be sanctified through all our trials : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

Life a Time to Sanctify Death.

TEXT.—“ *Whether we live it is unto the Lord we live, as whether we die it is unto the Lord we die.* ”—ROM. xv. 8.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves : Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

DEATH lies before all of us, and life in one sense is a preparation for it. What we can only do once we should try to do well. To die well is indeed important. Death may be sanctified in life.

We make Death a holy thing by learning to measure choices in life by it. “ How shall I wish to have acted in such and such a crisis,” we may say, “ when I come to die ? ” Death thus becomes to us a serious and *real* fact, a holy thing to help us in life. Then again, it is sanctified by gaining grace to think

of it as a very serious accident—but still an “accident in immortality.” We may get into the way of thinking of our own life as stretching on, and for a noble purpose, for which we can hope, with just this grave and serious accident between our present and our future. We make it a holy thing and powerful for our sanctification when we meditate upon it at fitting times, and from time to time, in order to make more real to us our great change and how then we shall stand alone before God, and will *realise* God and ourselves as never before. We sanctify it by connecting it at once with Sin and with Victory. To remember how it has “passed upon all men for that all have sinned,” how it is not natural to man, but unnatural, having come from within him, from another nature, is to be reminded of the seriousness of Sin, and therefore more and more to hate and avoid it. It is also to be reminded of the Victory of Christ, turning Death into a means of overcoming “him who had the power of Death, even the Devil,” and that so, with Christ, we may overcome.

But Death has, and must have, about it some touch of fear. “Through fear of Death, we are brought into bondage.” One work of Christ is to conquer the fear. The natural shrinking from Death may, indeed, and ever must remain. It is an unnatural divorce, it is a great “break up” of our state here, but it is sanctified and ennobled and relieved of its gloom by the Peace of God shed abroad in our hearts. If that is shed abroad, and in proportion as it is shed abroad, our nature is in harmony with all around

it. There is no disturbance, no uneasiness, no misery of fear. We are in harmony with God and the unseen, and the fear of Death diminishes and Death itself is a holy and calm and blessed thing by which we come nearer to God. We have the Peace of God, the "Peace in believing," when our repentance is true, our turning from sin whole-hearted, and when we are at peace with ourselves, Will, Desire, Conscience, working together aright. This "Peace in believing" takes away all fear and disturbance as to Death. Death is sanctified because life has been given to God.

Meditation.

How often have wild desires been revolting in me against Conscience and Will ! My will too often has given way. I have been at war with myself, and away from God. May I have grace to renounce Sin with a whole heart, to turn to God with all my strength, to have "eager and reverent thought" of Him, and so to sanctify Death by living in life at peace with God.

*Breathe, O Holy Spirit, on me,
With Thy tender, loving breath,
Sanctify the soul and body,
Thine in life and thine in death.*

Prayer.

O GOD, our Father, give us grace that we who are appointed to death, may sanctify our last end by a holy death ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Sunday in Lent.

Morning.

The Christian Calling.

TEXT.—“*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.*”—1 SAM. iii.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE Bible has been said to be a book of Calls. “Widely different, indeed,” have the calls been “in their circumstances, but alike in this, that they were a claim from Almighty God on the will and choice of man for a free and unconditional service.” The Bible, too, is “the history of the way in which the claim was met; and it was met variously—variously in the perfectness of the response made to it—variously in the struggle and discipline through which God’s call at last asserted its supremacy. . . . The calls of God are very various in their circumstances; and they are met in very various ways. But wherever

they meet us, and in whatever form, there is but one way of meeting them which carries with it blessing and hope : the way of humble and honest acceptance, of unfeigned self-dedication, of modest and yet resolute determination, of which the highest and purest expression is the answer to the most wonderful call ever made to man, 'Be it unto me according to Thy word.' "

There are, of course, prominent and special calls, such as many recorded in the Bible. But each of us has *some* call from God, and our response should be resolute and steady. We are "called to be saints," *i.e.*, in its first meaning, to be baptized Christians, to be members of the Body of Christ. God is good to *all* His creatures everywhere, and He will guide them, in His own way; but *we* Christians are "predestined, according to His purpose," to be members of His Church. *We* have been called, by His providence, to be "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven." We are called, when waking up to a consciousness of our high place in life, to "walk by faith," to "lay hold on eternal life," to be "saved by Hope," to "fight manfully under Christ's banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil," to "go from strength to strength," to be "conformed to the image of His dear Son."

It is, then, of the first importance that we should act accordingly. The Apostle teaches us to endeavour to "walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called." The Christian calling reminds a man that he is to lean on the true strength. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to help ourselves, our

sufficiency is of God." We have *enough* strength, thank God, if we use it. God's grace is all powerful and freely offered. (1) We must pray. A sincere Christian treats prayer as the life-breath of his soul. "In *everything* with prayer" . . . he will "let" his "request be made known unto God." "Whatsoever" he "asks in prayer believing he shall," in some form or other, "receive." His calling implies a heart lifted up in prayer. (2) He will be faithful in communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, after true preparation. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (3) He will constantly renew his repentance for past sin and his desire and will to trust in God: that constant looking up to God and leaning on God in heart and life is of the very essence of a Christian life, led worthily of a Christian calling. (4) He will, therefore, when he has asked and looked for guidance, learn brave resignation. Sorrow must come to him, and human feeling under sorrow is not wrong; but "God is the strength of" his "heart and" his "portion for ever." (5) He will try in divine strength to do bravely, humbly, fearlessly, the work set him to do in life.

Nothing can give strength, courage, and watchfulness to any soul more than the constant remembrance, "God has called me."

Meditation.

THY voice, O God, sounded before I could hear, calling me, through others, into Thy holy Church. I have heard it in conscience, in Thy Church, in the guiding of Thy divine providence. How often have

I failed to answer ! Henceforth will I listen and rise and do. Life is serious and blessed in following Thy call, not only in great things, in *all*.

*Lord, Thy voice rings through my being,
Teach me love and holy fear ;
Let me listen, hasten, follow—
Speak, Lord, for Thy child doth hear.*

Prayer.

O LORD, O loving Father, Thy will is good and holy. Thou guidest if we trust Thee, and never guidest wrong. Teach me to listen and learn and follow with courage, resignation, and love : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

The Christian's Aim.

TEXT.—“*Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God.*”—HEB. x.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

No work is well done unless there is a purpose. We all need to have an aim in life. The marksman will fire wildly unless he has a mark at which to aim. The craftsman must work languidly unless there is an object before him—the actual work he has to finish and, beyond, the reward of that work. The writer who writes must have a steady idea before him, round which all his other ideas cluster, otherwise his writing produces a weak effect. The statesman, amidst many diplomacies and acts of statecraft, has to keep before him the final end he is making for, for his country's good. The artist must have an ideal in his mind up to which to paint his picture or carve his statue. Nothing good, nothing lasting, nothing that tells can be done without a real purpose and steady aim. People may vary from their aim, as a marksman may shoot with unsteady hand. The result is, of course, failure, and there must be effort to correct this, renewed again and again. Indefiniteness, feebleness, varyingness have never achieved anything. Bad men have often made great "successes" simply by unfaltering aim and unscrupulous employment of means. "The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light."

The Christian has to learn this lesson. Only by degrees does the emptiness and unsatisfying character of the world come into our souls : only by degrees is the soul, like the hand, practised to do its work. What is the Christian Aim? Various answers may

be given. "To do good." "To save his soul." "To benefit his fellow men." "To leave a sad, bad world happier and better than he found it." These, in their degree, are all true. There is, however, but one force which is at once perfect in goodness and absolute in power. That force, in the long run, achieves all blessings. It is that which governs and guides the world. Through all the entanglements of human sin and folly it can draw a straight line and show a clear course. On it depends the system of the starry heavens; the course of human events; the working out of this vast problem of life; the final triumph of goodness. To fall in with this, to take part in this, to co-operate with this—that must be the aim of a true life—to do the Will of God.

(1) We have to prepare ourselves to find that Will cuts sharply across our human desires; that even the right and innocent wishes of our hearts have to be surrendered to it. (2) We find that, because of our weakness, we need *help*—God's grace—to do it. (3) So changeful and weak are we, we must renew our purposes again and again. Christ is our example and our help. God's Will is always good. It is, for us, that we grow in goodness—it is "our Sanctification."

Meditation.

How bound by fetters I am in wishing to do my own will! Often—too often—have I sought self, my own wishes, my own pleasure. God's Will is good. I will try to wait and obey, and in all, even little things, whenever I see it, to do it.

*Often sharp the sting of anguish,
Often cruel feels the rod :
Good it is for me to suffer,
Yet to love the Will of God.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, give me grace to put self aside, and only to obey Thee. Show me the way, and—however sad and painful—help me to do Thy Will : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Monday after the Third Sunday.

Morning.

God's Service Here.

TEXT.—“*Servants of God.*”—1 PET. ii. 16.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

MAN is a creature of Time, yet man knows he is born for Eternity. Sometimes the thought of Eternity seems so overwhelming that Time is as nothing. Time, however, is not nothing. We are here to be trained, here to work, here to suffer, here to learn the great lesson—the lesson of love, here to build up character and fulfil God's Will. The hereafter looms up awful, overwhelming, in those serious moments. It is so vast, so unimagined, so full of strange and even terrible possibilities. The thought of it is meant,

indeed, to sober, to steady, to exalt ; it is not meant to absorb.

Here and now we have our work. What is that work ? The only really noble thing in life is—Service. To serve is to fulfil the purpose of being ; it is to be great. No being can ever be great without carrying out the purpose of its existence. The reason of our *being* here is to serve.

We are God's creatures ; we are in His hands. In Him we "live and move and have our being." To do right, and therefore to be happy, we must serve God.

This is to state a theory or view of life, as it has been well said. There are opposing or conflicting views. Men cannot help forming some ideals of life. When young their ideal is prowess, from physical strength. Then, as life goes on, perhaps they waken up to aptitude and power—there is the ideal of intellectual achievement. Or, in the work of the world, there is success, acquiring of money, of honour, of respect from others. Or, there is the vanity of "position," and eyes are often blinded by the curious halo, like a glow in fog, from rank and place—there is the fatal ideal of being *first*.

Christianity puts a different ideal before us. It is seen by us in the personal Christ. It was achieved, realized, fulfilled perfectly in His life—the ideal of *Service*. "I am amongst you as one that *serveth*." Now is the time, here is the place for *serving God*. (1) We must keep before us that aim ; (2) we must try to do our duty just where He has placed us ; (3) we must watch for the indications of His Will, and be ready to

follow them ; (4) we must *be faithful* to Him in the use of the gifts and opportunities He has given to us ; in the use of the means of grace He has placed at our disposal ; in prayer and a prayerful spirit ; in high thoughts, and swift turning away from all that is base and bad and lowering ; in efforts by word and deed to take the right side ; in quiet, diligent doing of common duties with an uncommon temper ; in living the life of Faith, in fact, and consecrating all daily claims and works by a supernatural spirit and thoughts of another world. The ennobling of life, the mark of a truly religious man, is to be a servant of God.

Meditation.

STRANGE how I waken up to find how much I have done only to please self. Beyond, above, within me, is He on whom I depend. In all things I can serve Him by a faithful purpose and effort. I will look upon all common things of everyday as sacred to His service, and offer all daily to Him here.

*All the lowliest things, my Father,
Noble chances still may give,
Not to live for self, but rather,
Life of Life, for Thee to live.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, without whom we can do nothing, give us grace to use our passing days here in Thy service : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

God's Service Hereafter.

TEXT.—“*His servants shall serve Him.*”—REV. xxii. 3.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

WE are complex beings. We belong, so to speak, to two worlds. By the body, by the strong bonds of use and custom, we are tied to this world. Everything here at times,—and naturally, necessarily, rightly, in earlier years—looks so real. This world, with all its hopes, claims, work, affections, seems so present, so tangible, so certain ! Yet our common sense, our every-day experience, teach us it is moving on. Imperceptibly, but most truly, things change. At times we cannot but feel a settled sadness in the thought and knowledge of this. We must not allow that sadness to be paralysing or enervating, but we cannot fail to feel it. Indeed, it is a whisper of our immortality, or of the meaning of another world. It reminds us that “here we have no continuing city, but that we seek one to come” ; that here all work implies change ; that there is nothing really stable or lasting, but only Love ; that this is the training-

ground of life ; that work done here means preparation for work to be done there ; that God's service now is the noblest thing, because it is the preparation for God's service there.

There lie before us, indeed, the unimagined wonders of another world. We do not know much of them. There is an impenetrable veil. We feel it often with bitter sadness of friends who are gone.

“ Since Death has put so far apart,
We cannot hear each other speak.”

Yet some rays of light come through. There is a revelation of the Father in the face of Jesus Christ. There is a bringing to light of “ Life and Immortality.”

Two ideas meet us as to God's people beyond the veil. (1) There is the idea of rest. This life is full of *weary* labour. Only by degrees, as we see what strange uses life is put to, do we realise the weariness, toilsomeness, unsatisfying struggle that is constantly going on. We must need *rest*. The brain wants rest—rest from its perplexities, its discussion of involved and never-ending problems, from its ache at being so often baffled, from its craving, its unsatisfied craving, for truth. The will wants rest from its painful exertion and struggle to obey, to stand firm, not to swerve. The heart wants rest from the pain of its strong, passionate, noble affections, so sweet and supporting, and yet in a world of partings and sorrows, meaning always such a heavy tax of sacrifice.

(2) The second idea is work. “ His servants

shall serve Him." There is work for God's children to do there, nobly,

"Whate'er his hands are set to do,
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim."

The other world is no place of lazy inactivity, but of untoilsome, happy service. To that we must look forward. So much we know ;—Friends re-united ; old loves purified, strengthened, ennobled ; glorious work done ; service still—unimagined, unimaginable—in the best of causes—for this, by God's mercy in Christ, we look and long.

Meditation.

How beaten down I have been with work ! Yet the motive ennoble it. How longing for rest ! Rest will come. I must work now with diligence, unselfishness, in God's service, and look on to serve Him there in a spirit of joy, activity, yet rest.

*Here, how "incomplete and toilsome"
All our work—such pain ! such care !
Rest remaineth—work remaineth,
But how bright and blessed there !*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, who, in Thy dear Son, hast given to us great and precious promises, lift up our hearts with divine Hope, that here we may faithfully work Thy work, and serve Thee faithfully for ever hereafter : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday after the Third Sunday.

Morning.

Serving Christ in Small Things.

TEXT.—“*Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*”—COL. iii. 17.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

LITTLE things make up life. God is so great because He can see to the greatest things, can take care for unnumbered worlds, and also cares for the apparently most trifling things. With God nothing is trifling. All that belongs to His vast system of government is great. It is the mark of broad and great minds among men that they can take general views and see to details. If details are neglected in their proper place, all goes wrong. There is a difference between being “petty” and being attentive to detail. There is nothing great in exalting

trifles out of due proportion. The great and main thing is to let things fall into their due proportions and their proper places.

The reason is, that life is a very sacred thing. It is much deeper, more mysterious, more far-reaching than we are apt to imagine. It is true that we often mean by life mere being, mere existence, but with this is given to us power of seeing, knowing, feeling, enjoying, going into the secret of things in this world, and, above all, of rising to noble thoughts and noble affections.

The mere delight of life—when life is all athrob in our pulses and nerves—is a joy unspeakable.

Oh! the joy, the joy of living,
Oh! the brightness of breaking day;
Oh! the songs of the birds at the sun-dawn,
Oh! the bloom and the scent of the may!

And yet how much in life depends upon little things. We have to consider hours of work, and a wise use of leisure. We have to think of the needs of others—not merely great needs but all needs. Many a life becomes happier by our quiet *considerateness*. And considerateness is really the habit of taking in details, and dealing with them, of *considering* the details which so profoundly affect others.

Nothing that helps or hinders others, nothing that makes for happiness or sorrow, can be thought of no account by a large and loving mind.

Now all this is touched and affected by true service of Christ. Great public men—as they are called—are

often so puzzled by what they call "great questions" that they have no regard to the little things which affect numbers. Quiet, humble, inarticulate lives are often burdened with, to them, great sorrows by the *inconsiderateness* of others. These do not think of "little things." God beholdeth little things. "Every hair of our head is numbered." Christ attended to tiny wants, cared for poor people, thought of those of whom others did not think, worked a miracle of wonderful magnitude to save some acquaintances inconvenience and discomfort at Cana. To follow Him, then, is to take duties as they come—small as well as great. Little attentions to the using of stray moments, to the loyalty to fixed moments of prayer and of distasteful duties, these sanctify what appear little things after the example and in the power of Christ. One rule is "Sufficient unto the day"; so do duty as it comes, and do not despise anything—however small it appears—which touches duty. "Faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Meditation.

How often have I been slack and careless about the little details of duty! I have often been carried away by imagination or evil desire into doing great things and neglecting little duties. How unlike Christ! how unworthy of Him! May I more constantly keep my eye fixed upon Him in all the details of life, and spring up with alacrity to fulfil the smaller as well as the greater claims.

*“ The trivial round, the common task,
Should furnish all we ought to ask ;
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.”*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, without whose Will not a sparrow can fall to the ground, give me grace to follow Thy dear Son by a mind attentive to the little duties of life : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

Service for God's Glory.

TEXT.—“ *Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*”—I COR. x. 31.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

CONSISTENCY is one of the most difficult things for fallen man, and one of the most necessary for a Christian. Religion sometimes is made to mean

an interest in religious matters, rather than a constant power in the whole life. But if religion be anything, it must be everything. It must be that sense of the bond between the soul and God, and all the consequences of that sense, which will underlie and *tone* every action.

St. Paul warns us of this. Life for a religious man is service—after the model of Christ; also for God's glory. This must go into the little details of life, such as eating and drinking; such as common conversation and daily intercourse with ordinary acquaintances. Why? For this reason. Physical life is the soil in which grows spiritual life. The body and soul are so linked together that each must affect the other. Purity and self-restraint have their seats and springs in the Will, but desire affects the Will, and desire closely connects itself with the structure of the body. They act and react on each other. Again, thought and speech are of the mind and soul, but they too are guided and governed, to a large extent, by the Will. In these, also, the body has a partnership with the soul. Evil speech affects mind and body; evil thoughts affect the body; and then it, by reaction, affects the soul. So it is that, in all these things, for the Christian is needed sanctification.

By God's glory we mean the sense of the divine perfections; and to do all things to God's glory is to show forth in the world, and to have in our own life and actions, the sense of that goodness and holiness which make God what He is.

We may use our powers, physical and mental and

spiritual, simply for selfish ends. If we do, then, by a necessary law, selfishness spreads over the whole character, and the character becomes lowered ; God's glory never appears in it. We are made in the image of God, but that image has been marred by Sin. The Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ is the power of restoring that blessed image. To use the forces of that Incarnation, to conform ourselves in all things, by grace, to the image and likeness of Christ, is to do all things to the glory of God. This, then, means an effort to rule ourselves according to the law of Christ in little things. In this way it is that character is formed. It is true, also, that, if this has been neglected—if men have allowed themselves in undisciplined ways, especially in all that touches physical life—still there may be repentance and turning to God, and recovery, and steady effort to do all to His glory ; but better far if, from the beginning, that steady effort has been made. Then, indeed, they “go from strength to strength, until to the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion.”

Meditation.

I MUST remember the need of calm and steady discipline of all my being. Body, soul, and spirit, I am God's. In my life must be reflected His glory. How often in word, in thought, in act, has that been forgotten ! Henceforth may I carry self-rule into all commonest things, and be made like my Saviour, and by His grace show in life some faint image of God's goodness.

*God, Thy glory fills the Heavens,
Winds, waves, sing with sweet accord :
May it shine in us Thy creatures,
Brightening thought and deed and word.*

Prayer.

O GOD of all glory and beauty, who hast made us as images of Thyself, give us grace in all things so to rule ourselves according to Thy commandments, that we may show forth Thy goodness and advance Thy Kingdom : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday after the Third Sunday.

Morning.

Serving God by Faith.

TEXT.—“*Without Faith it is impossible to please Him.*”

—HEB. xi. 6.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

WE are, if we are wise, always learning by experience. What has been tells us, in some measure, what is likely to be. If we are sincerely religious now, we believe that God is the spring of all human life. In the mystery of life we are certain that we have wills of our own ; we are equally certain that, while *we* are causes, there is a great First Cause, and that *His* will is supreme. So it is that all that has come to us—not, indeed, the sin with which we have marred all—is of God. A great blessing, a noble and warm and lasting affection, a happy home,

an overwhelming pleasure or joy—these come. Or some great sorrow, some bitter disappointment, some unexpected change in the course of life and turn in the tide have come and the heavens are clouded over.

Well, for the religious man, all these things say—God. You are sure—however you may rejoice, however you may wince—here is something of God's marvellous nearness and love and care. The very delight of life and its cares and sorrows all speak of Him. *That* is real faith. The "men of old," it has been said, had a "passionate, delighted, triumphant faith." Thus they served God. Thus may we. For all work is well done when, and indeed only when, we take delight in it. Now, to this faith comes joy in the very thought of God. There may be much sorrow, real human pain and heartache, yet where this faith is, it is true to say, "To the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness." "He will not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast and believeth in the Lord." He may *have* "evil tidings," but he will not be *afraid* of them. There is in him a spring of glad faith which fills his soul with peace in serving God, come what may.

"This life of ours," it is nobly said, "locked and dovetailed into the vast framework of social existence, seems so solid that it needs an effort or imagination to think of it as shaken. But that effort of imagination Scripture bids us make. It bids us think of ourselves in totally new conditions, in utterly altered relations to all around us; *how* strange, *how* awful we know not, nor ever shall know here. It bids us think of the world itself pass-

ing through endless phases, till the day of its doom. Search as we will, we can find nothing to rest upon, nothing that will endure the real trial, but the faith of the Psalmist in the eternal Kingdom of God—the faith of the Psalmist lit up by the ‘grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ.’ ”

This faith makes service strong. The uncertainties, changes, sorrows of life can do nothing to shake a soul serving God with this living faith. In entering any new experience, this faith, that God has guided, that God is the Spring of Life, gives courage. In looking, in the last experience of all, through the gates of Death to the unimagined wonders of another world, it is *by this faith* that true service is done, and God made to the soul what He is, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of Life.

Meditation.

WEAK, often, has been my faith, O God, yet I desire to please and serve Thee. Rekindle my faith. I will look up. I will think on times past and remember all that God has done for me—earnest of what He is ever willing to do. O my soul ! look *through* things seen, and in all, with living, buoyant, unremitting faith—serve God.

*Change on change, now joy, now sorrow,
Till we rest beneath the sod ;
Still all turns to glorious service,
By a living faith in God.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who rulest all things, and hast guided us in life, and given us all we have of joy or sorrow, strengthen in us a living faith, that in all things we may ever serve Thee with a loving mind : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.**Serving God by the Fight of Faith.**

TEXT.—“*Fight the good fight of Faith.*”—I TIM. vi. 12.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

ST. PAUL constantly uses the metaphor of battle in describing the Christian life. Partly, no doubt, because he had been brought much into contact with Roman soldiers, and had realised their discipline and courage ; also, and chiefly, because God so guided him to help the lives of other men.

There is a *real* opposition between Good and Evil, and when the soul is set against what is wrong that

opposition becomes a felt and living struggle. St. Paul knew well, as every serious Christian must know, that there are living Spirits opposed to the divine law of Right and Wrong, who are no contemptible adversaries. He knew the awful force of the current of thoughts and ways in human life setting in against God, which we call "the world." He knew the fierceness of the desires of the Flesh. Life, he felt, *in* the soul of any sincere and earnest Christian, must be a battle.

There are certain principles, or forces, which must be brought into play if that battle is to mean victory.

Of these the first is Faith.

We know that, by grace, that form of manly strength which lays hold upon the invisible is of the first importance to the soul. "This is the victory that overcometh 'the world,'" says the Apostle, "even our faith." "Endured as seeing Him who is invisible," is the description of those who passed through trial to victory. "Thy faith hath made thee whole" may be said to be the comprehensive statement of the means by which God's power acted in "casting out devils."

For our battle must be fought (1) with *disciplined* determination. Like St. Paul, it must be "not uncertainly, as of one that beateth the air." Regular habits, regulated thoughts, an ordered life under the guidance of a controlling Will—these are necessary—and all imply faith.

Again: (2) The battle must include all parts of our being. The bodily desires are not to be despised but controlled. Faith teaches us the body is a sacred

thing. The mind and our intellectual capacities are not automatic. We are tempted to imagine that we cannot help what we *think*. This is a mistake. Thought can be restrained and governed. It requires a strong hand upon it. Evil thoughts have to be turned from swiftly. Doubting thoughts become only modes of our training when we face them reverently, in the spirit of "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." Then we cannot go far wrong. (3) The affections have to be purified, ennobled, exalted, by the deepening sense that they are God's gifts, and that all real "love is of God"—that is, by faith.

Again : (4) This battle is fought in this way, because Faith *justifies*. People have struggled and quarrelled in times past as to "Justification by Faith." It is true, however, for Faith is no mere "mental athletics" : it is a trend, an attitude, of the whole being ; of the Will, as well as of the Mind and Affections, towards God. It makes unseen things *realities*. It looks *beyond* the present scene. Thus it "justifies," for it raises the soul to a higher level. It makes it *look up*. It puts things into their true proportions. It fixes the eye on what is high and noble and lasting. Thus it makes the soul "just." It "justifies," for it makes us what we *ought* to be. Above all, it is that power in us which "lays hold" upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and enables us to live in union with Him who is our life.

Meditation.

"WALKING by sight !" Carried away by the impulses of life and the impressions of the passing

moment. Alas ! how often, how long, have these been my ways. May my eye look upwards, and my whole being be set to a higher life and unseen things. So shall I withstand spiritual attack by the power of a living faith.

*Struggle ceases not with Evil,
I must rise if e'en I fall :
Fighting World and Flesh and Devil,
By the Faith that conquers all.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who givest us more than we ask or think, and art more ready to hear than we to pray, increase our faith, and give us grace so by faith to fight the good fight that we may lay hold on Eternal Life : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday after the Third Sunday.

Morning.

Serving God by Hope.

TEXT.—“*The Hope of His calling.*”—EPHES. i. 18.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

IF life be, as it is, battle; if to struggle against wrong in ourselves or in the world implies Faith; still we need more. We need—it may be said, pre-eminently—Hope. “We can,” it has been truly said, “understand why faith should be singled out: it is the foundation of the whole structure of religion; it is the bond between the creature and his invisible Maker and God; it is the special title of his acceptance; it is the ground of his self-devotion and obedience, of his highest and noblest ventures.” Yes, but why Hope?

Hope is a moral power ; that is, it requires strong effort of thought and Will. All moral power is valuable. All is needed for our battle of life. Our place and time and circumstances, perhaps, make Hope a more needful power than in other cases. Our time is one of unexampled energy and unexampled trial. The hurry and struggle of life are keen and depressing. Old things have passed away. Along with many blessings that have come to us, there are many hindrances and trials. Our race is a strong and earnest race, but—as a people—we are, with our seriousness, not without a tendency to gloom. Our very religion we are apt to make, not only serious, but grim. Self-restraint and reserve mean, indeed, strength : they often mean, also, a sad view of life. The circumstances of life in a nation so active, so driven on by competition, so obliged to energy in the struggle of life, help to beat down the spiritual powers, and to lead men to a more or less patient *acquiescence* in trials as they come, rather than a bright as well as energetic attack upon difficulties. For all of these reasons, Hope is a virtue, a real effort of manly strength terribly needed. For often, in the soul's struggle, what we have to fear is just this mere *acquiescence*. It may lead to cold, desponding indifference, and this to worse things.

We know that there *is* such a thing as *holy* indifference. That is different. That is using grace so to love or use anything on earth, not to chill affection, but to be ready to surrender all to God's will, to learn to allow the things of this world more and more to sit lightly upon us that we may be willing—

whatever the pain may be naturally and rightly—to go when God calls.

Besides this, however, there *is* a terrible temptation to Despondency and Despair. These must be resisted: these enemies are met by the virtue of Hope. We have Faith—we *believe* in God because He knows all things, and is utterly true, because He is the Truth. We have Hope—we hope in God because He is good, because He is Goodness. Hope, then, is a duty. It is not an easy duty. It is the “energy and the effort” of Faith. It puts life and reality into God’s promises, braces the soul and fills it with vigour for its struggle. We know that God will do all things well. We can trust Him. Many things make us sad. This is not wrong. Human feeling is God’s gift. There is nothing Christian in being heartless. We must not, however, allow Sadness to become Despondency. “The God of Hope,” it is truly said, “calls to us out of the darkness, and we are unfaithful to Him if, in our distress and fear, we shut our ears to His voice, and dwell despondingly on a future which is in His hands.” Thus springing up with divine Hope, we fight our battle. This is needed in Life; this is needed in Death. If we arouse, revive, and use Hope now, it will come to our aid in the terrible crises of life, especially the last great crisis of all.

Meditation.

How hast thou sunk down, O my soul! and been beaten in battle by giving way to weakening thoughts, through failure to use Hope. Hope in God, “for I

will yet give Him thanks, who is the health of my countenance and my God." So fight, and try again, and be strong.

*Fight, nor deem the struggle endless,
Though thy sorrows come in flood :
Never, never, art thou friendless,
Thou may'st hope, for God is good.*

Prayer.

O GOD and Father of all comfort, who dost never fail those that seek Thee : Give us, in all our trials and temptations, such a power of living Hope, that we may faithfully fight our battle and have the victory : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

Serving God by Hope in Christ.

TEXT.—"Jesus . . . is our Hope."—I TIM. i. 1.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

BEYOND this life there is another. A healthy mind learns, and rightly, to hope for God's blessing here, and for God's care. Such a mind learns how in prayer is its great strength, its unending comfort. Many things, both directly related to this world and to religion, are subjects—and just subjects—of hope.

None the less, it is true that life has its dark side. To that dark side God, in His mercy, brings light. That light is "in the face of Jesus Christ." Examples of the way in which, if sincerely religious, "Jesus is our hope" are worth dwelling upon.

(1) There are few things in life so heart-trying as parting with those we love. It is one of the strange ironies of our mysterious pilgrimage on earth that, in it, we are supplied with an abundant wealth of love, and that that love, so elevating, so ennobling, is a means of the acutest torture. To love, we may truly say, is to suffer. We love with passionate devotion, and are raised by our love to nobler thoughts, and holier feelings, and worthy self-forgetfulness. And yet how often it happens that most of our lives are passed with those who have no special affection for us, nor we for them. And the actual pangs of parting mean, to those who really *can* love, the acutest agony. Every Christian knows that here we have the living Jesus *in sympathy*. He suffered it all; He feels for us, with us; He is "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever."

(2) Think of Sin, and Judgment. When we waken

up to their gravity, we are overwhelmed with the thought of it. What has been done cannot be undone. In the New Testament "the future is viewed in immediate and exclusive relation to this life as a life of probation, a life given for obedience and duty, and inextricably connected with it." Then there is Judgment. "It is the winding-up and close of that scene of time in which we have all been so deeply interested ; henceforth a new stage of existence begins, into which the consequences of this life pursue us, but of which all the conditions are absolutely beyond our comprehension." This is very awful when we rouse ourselves to think of it. How shall we dare to hope? The answer is, "Jesus is our Hope." He who is to be our Judge *is our Saviour*. We cannot bear our own sins, we cannot plead our own cause before absolute Righteousness. Jesus died for us. He has made an atonement. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins."

(3) The thought of Death is very awful. So much to part with ! so much unknown, untried, to enter upon ! Yet here, too, Jesus is our Hope. He has conquered Death. He has passed, unscathed, through the gates of the grave. He has promised us not to forsake us. Neither "life nor death nor any other creature is able to separate us from His dear love." The fact is, He is ever near us and loves us with a love unspeakable, immeasurable. If our hearts are ever calling Him, "Abide with me," with us He will abide to sustain, nay, to be our Hope.

Meditation.

To be truly spiritually minded is to live in the thought of, the remembrance of, the practical use of, the Unseen ; it is to see by faith those who *are*, but are invisible to the bodily eye. I have lived too much merely for the outer world. Arouse thyself by faith, O my soul ! If I try to lead a spiritual life, if I call often upon God and think much of Him, He will hear me. If earthly friends pass away, Jesus is near. How little have I thought of Him. I may and will do so in the midst of work in life. He is my Hope.

*Sad are partings ; Sin needs fighting ;
With Death's forces who can cope ?
Near us there is one who loves us,
Strong, true Jesus is our Hope.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, who hast sent Thy dear son to be our Redeemer, comforter, support : Give us grace to know Him, love Him truly, and in all trials and sufferings to place in Him our hope : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday after the Third Sunday.

Morning.

Serving God by Love of Christ.

TEXT.—“*The Love of Christ constraineth us.*”—2 COR. v. 14.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look down upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

CHRISTIANITY is nothing less than “a citizenship” in Heaven. It seems incredible, impossible to us, that, amidst the varying commonplace calls of ordinary life, we should be able to have principles drawn from the highest things, and be in close contact, in close friendship, with unseen persons. Yet so it is. The outer scenes of our activity do not swallow up and comprehend *all* our life. Within us there is the real world. There, determinations are made, and purposes shaped, and acts of will and affection done, which affect the whole life and the lives of others. This is the *real* world. Here we meet God, and the

Holy Angels, and the Saints, and the Blessed. Here are the true springs of life, so that the *outer* scene may often well appear a passing dream. It is in this inner life we really love one another, and when we love, know one another, for Love is the true eyesight of the Soul. It is here, *in* ourselves, *in* our souls, *in* our inner lives, that we serve God.

Service, however, may be hard, business-like, almost oppressive, unless it is softened as well as strengthened by human love. Now, this is what God does for us. He has shown us Himself in His true character by the revelation of His dear Son. Those who desire to know the way God looks at things, His attitude towards life, have only to study the human life of Jesus Christ our Lord. That study and those inward teachings of the Holy Ghost which come in heart and conscience to us all, bring us to know much of God. But it is in lonely moments, in thought, prayer, when we meet God, and know Him. Thus we approach God the Father by Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is impossible for serious and religious minds to allow themselves to speak with too open an enthusiasm of being moved by "the Love of Jesus." They feel that expressions like that of St. Paul's are for great Saints. They doubt their own depth and sincerity. They are afraid of self-deceiving. They fear to allow their feelings and impulses to outrun their convictions. It is, however, true that, in a very real sense, they may be moved by this deep motive. It is true that there was, there must necessarily have been, in the opening days of the Christian Church, an

enthusiasm, a personal devotion, a personal sense of nearness to, and fellowship with, Christ, such as could not be to the same extent again. There can be, however, as then, a "convinced seriousness," a life in its motives and principles "hidden with Christ in God." "This seeking, minding, the things above, where Christ is sitting at God's right hand"—"these overpowering and abiding convictions of the inexpressible wonder and hope of human destiny, ending always in the plainest, homeliest, most direct practical precepts for the pure and honest conduct of life"—these things have been felt in later ages. These are felt by true Christians now. These show themselves in a desire to help others, in mastery of self, in effort to rise to a true ideal of duty, in love of goodness, in love of all that Christ has shown, and trust in all His promises, and endeavour to obey His commands, which is "love of Jesus."

Meditation.

O MY GOD, only by Thy grace can I do right. Only by Thy grace can I know Thee and see Thee in the revelation of Thy dear Son. How ungrateful have I been ! And yet, as Thou hast done all for me, so may I, if I know Thee, do all for Thee. Give me the grace to love Thee, and the grace to use and profit by grace given.

*By Example, by Redemption,
Thou hast given Thyself for me.
Teach me, Jesus, by the Spirit,
Some true, faithful love to Thee.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, give me grace to be, in all things, Thy true child. Help me to forget self more. Give me some real love for Thy dear Son : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.**Serving God through Love.**

TEXT.—“*Your Labour of Love.*”—I THESS. i. 3.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE “*caritas Dei*”—the love of God—was revealed in Jesus Christ. There are two sides to the revelation of the New Testament. (1) There is a revelation, severe and terrible, of the punishment of Sin. It has been truly said, “For the sins of the well-taught, the high-placed, the rich, the self-indulgent, for obstinate and malignant sin, the sin of those who hate and deceive, and corrupt, and betray, His wrath is terrible, its expression is unrestrained. . . . It is undeniable . . . that in opening new prospects to mankind, in calling for higher efforts, He has darkened and deepened the lines about diffi-

culty, about danger, about failure *here*. In opening new views of Goodness and Hope He has thrown new shadows upon Sin, on our profound self-ignorance and self-deceit, our insincerities, our provocations. And He has deepened and fixed the lines about Judgment, about its certainty, its searchingness, its serious realities." And (2) "For the sins of the miserable, the forlorn, the friendless, He has pity and compassion." There is no doubt that our Lord has brought out God's anger against Sin, that is, He has brought out the true view of the holiness of God in relation to Evil. It is a grave and terrible warning.

It is, however, true that the New Testament reminds us of nothing more certainly than of the Love of God. The idea of this was not before the minds of Humanity until the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. In the Old Testament God appears as a God of Mercy indeed, but much as a God of Judgment. In the Psalms, however, we see a soul not only alive to the awfulness and greatness of God's sovereignty, but able to enter into feelings of passionate affection and unshaken trust. But in the New Testament this becomes clearer and clearer. Here is the revelation of a Father as seen in His dear Son. We may now call God and think of God as Father. A new world opens up to us in consequence. Sin is terrible because it hurts a Father's love. The punishment of sin is terrible, but it is a punishment self-inflicted. We make it for ourselves. The moving force which the Christian revelation brings to put in motion our thoughts and efforts, is the Love of God. Whatever

mysteries surround religion, whatever dark streaks may be across the glory and brightness of Life and Immortality, there can be no doubt that the New Testament is rich in revelations of the fatherly care and love of God.

The Epistles of St. John are especially full of this. He, the most intimate friend of the Lord Jesus, has most insisted on the reassuring fact to us poor human beings in our sorrow-laden lives, that we are God's children, that we have a Father. To serve for love is to make service light and bearable. We can serve and act and think, for the love of God.

Meditation.

Too often have I been tempted to think of God as a tyrant watching me, ready and wishing to punish me. I am taught by Christ, by His Apostles, that I have a Father. Work and suffering are more possible when I know that I have a Father who loves me. Surely I shall try more earnestly to do right, and to suffer nobly when I act from love to my Father.

*Sweet it is, in life's sharp struggles,
E'en though sad, to look above ;
Still to work, endure, and suffer,
Prompted by a Father's love.*

Prayer.

O God, who hast revealed Thyself by Thy Son that we may think of Thee as a Father, open our hearts to Thy love. Give us grace to act as Thy children and from love of Thee to serve Thee faithfully : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday after the Third Sunday.

Morning.

Serving God not in Word but in Fact.

TEXT.—“*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.*”—ST. MATT. vii. 21.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

RELIGION is one of those mighty powers in life which, if it is at all, it must be real. And yet Religion touches so many sides of our nature that there are dangers to its reality everywhere. There is a religion of emotion. The feelings must, of course, be greatly affected by the high thoughts and claims of Christianity. There is poetry in Religion, and there is that which affects all the emotional part of our nature which is necessarily moved by religion.

Emotion to be true can be only the expression of what is deep and real. There is an emotion which may be only passing, which has to do with feeling transiently stirred. We are much affected by others. A great wave of feeling may pass over a mass of human beings and carry us with it, leaving us high and dry on rocks or sand. A vast crowd, moved by a strong common sentiment, can communicate its main feelings to each and all brought in contact with it. So warm hymns, moving devotions, may affect even those who have no lasting sense, in their souls, of the tie that binds them to God.

There is a religion of investigation, of curiosity. The great questions which come up in Religion give rise to thoughts of interest in many speculative minds. It is thus that a man may be eminently theological, yet far from deeply religious.

Again, Religion may be simply a matter of habit. The force of circumstances, the strength of association with the ways and thoughts of others; a thousand impulses which move life may create a kind of religion—a religion in which people will not be wanting in religious exercises, and even enjoy the ministrations of the Church—and yet the heart not be really touched.

True Religion may be found in many degrees and various stages. Often, when most true, it is most hidden. Whenever it is, it means *fact*, not merely word. Like all real forces in the soul, it is shown forth by its real consequences. True Religion is a deep, awe-inspiring, moving, controlling sense of the nearness of God and the soul's relation to God. It

implies solid *principle*. It affects all things. It puts a restraint on temper. Its force is felt in our words, in our ordinary actions, in the little things as well as the great things of life. It is a principle, *i.e.*, a forcible fact which applies to all circumstances. It creates an atmosphere. "The deliberate purpose to serve God is the mark of a truly religious man." It is fed by, it shows itself above all in, Prayer. For if the relation is recognised, intercourse will be necessarily maintained. God is *everywhere* for a soul truly religious. Thus, though Religion makes life solemn, it gives it sunlight. However things may change, there is a real force in a religious soul to comfort, to sustain, to bless.

Meditation.

LET me fear mere emotion, or mere knowledge of religious things. Let me seek God everywhere, and act for Him everywhere. He is mine. I am His. I must sustain this by Prayer. God's Presence welcomed in my soul will be found there to comfort, support, guide.

*Deep and real be the binding
To my God, MY God. In deed,
Thought, and word from Him still finding
Strength: and help in time of need.*

Prayer.

O MY GOD, cleanse me from Sin. Deliver me from Self-deceit. Help me to be real. Make my

religion true and powerful to Thy glory : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

Serving God by Serving Others.

TEXT.—“*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*”—GAL. vi. 2.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of Thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

CHRISTIANITY is a social Religion. There are two truths which come before our minds in thinking of Religion and Mankind. (1) We cannot but remember the vast mass of human beings which go to make up the society of men in whole or in parts. “This,” it has been well said, “is a great system of which each of us is an integral part ; we hold our life *of it* and in it ; we are among its phenomena, we only exist under its conditions. It is the sphere and scene of all our interests, of all our activity, of all our freedom ; but besides all the room and play that there is in it for individual choice and action, it

limits us. . . . We live in the midst of collective Human Life—in nations, in churches, in families, in societies.” We think of life, in fact, as a great collective whole. We belong to a mass of human beings. This is a truth which must affect us in many ways.

(2) There is another truth which presses upon us, if we *think* of life at all. “But besides all this,” to quote again, “out of the ‘infinite multitude of creatures,’ alongside of the mighty phenomena of Nature, dwarfed by them and yet strangely above them, there emerges the individual soul, the individual life, single, separate, solitary. It is as real as the vast mass of life which we call Mankind ; its interests are not less great ; its course, its fortunes are not less eventful. Lost to our eye in the vast ‘sea of being,’ there it is, nevertheless, waking or sleeping, hour by hour, and day by day, beginning, following on, the stages, the trials of an existence which is to be endless.”

Now Christ seized on these two truths. He and His Apostles taught men to use them, to see and know how the one told on the other. Each soul is to remember its responsibility to itself. Each is to remember that service of God implies service of Man. This is so (1) because we are all God’s creatures and we look up, all of us, to the same Source of life. This is so (2) because we are all human, and subject to the same trials and sorrows—all on the same strange journey from the cradle to the grave. We are often softened towards others by thinking, “He, too, is tempted ; he, too, must die and

must be judged." (3) This is so because Christ died for us all. We were all in His heart amid the sorrows of His Passion. This is so especially (4) because we Christians have been called into special nearness to God, as, in a special sense, His children. We, if we serve God, must "bear one another's burdens." We can do it (1) by kindness. It is wonderful what messages of kindness are—even the kind thought or kind word. (2) By intercession. Prayer is a mighty *power*, and we must exercise it for others. (3) By self-denying help. It may be money, or time, or influence—but what we have we must give for others. (4) It may be by sympathy. The sympathy of our Lord, of which we are sure, is one of our greatest helps in life, and to feel *with*, not merely *for*, others is a real help in time of need. Christianity is incompatible with selfishness. "Done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

Meditation.

How often, through carelessness, inconsiderateness, temper, self-pleasing, sloth, have I forgotten the needs of others! Let me think often of sorrows and trials suffered by others! To help Christ by helping others, this my Lord has taught me. Let me never forget this, O my Lord.

*Let me hear, like John, Thy heartbeats,
 Master, leaning on Thy breast:
 Learning thus, help love and sorrow,
 For the sorrows of the rest.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, give me grace to follow the unselfish life of Thy dear Son, and to learn, as He taught, to help Him by helping others and so to serve Thee: for the sake of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Morning.

The Grace of God.

TEXT.—“*The glory of His grace.*”—EPHES. i. 6.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

THE New Testament is ever speaking of the Grace of God. St. Paul speaks of “the Glory” of that “Grace.” By “glory” we mean splendour and approximate perfection in some sense. A “glorious” sunset or sun-dawn means the splendour of graduated colour in the morning and evening sky. A “glorious” deed means something done which has required the combination of great moral forces. God’s glory means the sum of His perfections. “The Glory of His grace” would seem to mean the power, beauty, perfection, of that grace.

By "Grace" we mean favour, something freely, lovingly given, not earned and paid for. God's favourable kindness is never an empty thing. It means something substantial coming from His unmerited love.

Grace, then, is a *power*. The world is full of unseen powers. We call them by names; we do not see them or understand them. The wind cannot be seen, but its reality and force we know when we see the trees bent and torn, or the waves of ocean lashed with fury by the gale. The electric current is unseen—we call it electricity. We do not understand it, nor are we able to answer questions "Why" about it. What we know of it is from its effects. Act in such and such a way in regard to it, and certain effects follow.

The Grace of God is an unseen, spiritual force. Of it we know (1) by revelation: we are told of it; we know that it comes to man by the Incarnate God, by Jesus Christ; we know that the Minister of Grace is God the Holy Ghost. (2) By its effects: men's hearts are changed, their minds illuminated, their stubborn wills subdued in unseen and marvellous ways. This sometimes is *suddenly* (or apparently so), as in the case of St. Paul. Sometimes, more often, it is *gradually*, so that the other world, and God, and Christ, and the Angels and Saints, and spiritual forces, become more real and effective to us, as by a slow but sure breaking of the dawn.

This also we know: grace is freely given, but it does not *force*, it assists. Its power is enormous. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens

us by grace ; but we can resist it. It will never compel, it will assist. We speak of *sanctifying* grace, that is, help given in special ways, as in the Sacraments, which are also called *habitual* graces ; and of *actual* grace, *i.e.*, help given every moment to those who need and desire. Grace begins a work in the soul. We can, by its help, co-operate with it, that the work be “continued and ended” by God.

We know that grace is never refused as an answer to faithful prayer. “Ask and ye shall receive.” “How much more shall your Heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” This is a joy. We know by grace we may overcome any sin, and do anything good, and gain any wisdom and light ; and we know that our Heavenly Father loves to give to those who come to Him in sincerity and truth.

Meditation.

SELF-SATISFIED, self-reliant, how often, looking back, I see failure upon failure from the leaning on self ! How often, too, that I have been marvellously helped when I have looked to God. Oh ! for grace, even to feel this, and act accordingly. Oh ! for grace to use grace when given.

*God, whose grace is strong and tender,
God, whose grace is high and deep ;
Help me to entire surrender
To Thy grace : then keep me, keep.*

Prayer.

O LOVING Father, who hast sent Thy Son to be, not only our Redeemer, but also the Giver of all Grace: Grant that, by Thy Holy Spirit, I may be guided, ruled, and kept in Thy grace: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Comfort of God.

TEXT.—“*The God of all Comfort.*”—2 COR. i. 3.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

WE all know too well that life is full of sorrow. “Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.” We have all some sorrows, and times come when we learn that what we had thought were sorrows were, in fact, as nothing compared to the *real* sorrows that have found us out. Sorrows come to us (1) from Sin. The remembrance of past sin is full of sorrow, and this is a strengthening and ennobling sorrow, where, by the love of God in it, it is the

spring of a real repentance. (2) Again, sorrow comes from the sins or faults of others. This is a trial of a very helpful kind. (3) Sorrow also comes—in this strange, perverse world—from great love. Love, in our present life, is indeed the nearest thing to God, but it necessitates and implies a tax of Sacrifice, and the deeper the love the more certain is the sorrow. This sorrow is trying and searching, but there is no bitter self-reproach in it. The strong man would rather have it all than have missed the ennobling love.

“ 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all.”

Comfort in sorrow is a difficult thing to find. In this world people sometimes, and in kindness, offer comfort—

“Vacant chaff, well meant for grain.”

To a true and strong soul comfort cannot come from without. Sympathy may come, and that is a blessing—the sense of other true hearts feeling *with* us—but not comfort in its deepest sense. Comfort must come from within. One can comfort. God is “the God of all Comfort.” It is a strength to us to remember that this is revealed to us as a certain fact. This is a glorious fact. God allows sorrow. He even sends sorrow. He does not try to bring oblivion to us, or advise us to forget. No true heart can forget. No, He brings a mysterious blessing in, with, above, sorrow to those who seek Him. We must cling to that truth. God is “the God of

all Comfort." The Holy Spirit of God is called "the Comforter." Comfort comes, not by removing sorrow, or teaching us to forget, but by sanctifying sorrow and deepening love.

We can see one way in which God comforts. The most terrible thing would be to be left by God. One of the most terrible verses of Holy Scripture is, "Ephraim is joined to idols, *let him alone.*" We do not want God, our Father, to *let us alone*. We are taught that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." This is a *comfort*. We know, then, that sorrow is a mark of God's tender affection. It teaches us to love more. It develops and builds up character. God comforts, too, by the wonderful encouragements and commands to pray. It is an unspeakable blessing to be able to hold intimate intercourse with the Great and All-holy, and that, too, about all the concerns and all the sorrows of life. Comfort is found in sorrow for sin, in confession of sin, in communion in the Lord's Body and Blood. Beyond this, God has His own mysterious fatherly ways in comforting a soul. His grace is sufficient. He is "the God of all Comfort."

Meditation.

LIFE is full of sorrow. I cannot, if I wished, forget. How has my sin brought sorrow! How, also, has love—the sunlight of life—brought sorrow! Sorrow is "a cruel fellowship." It has cut me down. O, my soul! look up. Be strong. God's ways are not your ways. He will know how to comfort. Trust Him.

*Sin brings sorrow : Love brings sorrow,
Heart so broken, life so drear;
Trust; then dawns a calm to-morrow,
Unforsaken ! God is near.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, God of all comfort, look upon us who sorrow. Leave us not, but grant that by the comfort of Thy grace we may be ever nearer to Thee : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after the Fourth Sunday.

Morning.

The Comfort of Freedom.

TEXT.—“*Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*”—GAL. iv. 26.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved : through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

“FREEDOM!” “Liberty!” Such words move, as they have ever moved, the hearts of all thinking and earnest men. We know how we rejoice in being citizens of a free country ; in being freemen ; how we abhor tyranny, and believe that in disciplined liberty is the saving, in civil and in social matters, of mankind. For freedom, liberty, do not mean licence. They mean the opportunity for a good and healthy play of faculty within the just and right limits, unrepressed by a strong hand, wisely controlled by wise self-government.

“Liberty” is also one of the watchwords of the Gospel of Christ. Sin is always represented as a tyranny—an usurpation. Sin is a slavery. If a man’s will cannot work freely, so as to refuse temptation, that man is “tied and bound by the chain of his sins.” Self, the lower self, the self-seeking self, is a tyrant. The higher will is placed in chains by it. The *real* being cannot act. Any strong desire which leads the will captive, so that it cannot act freely in matters of Duty, is a tyranny. The desire may be harmless, innocent, even good, but if it can exert such sway that the human will cannot have free play in consequence, that desire is a tyranny, and the soul is not free.

The unseen powers of darkness are ever seeking to bring men into bondage. Christ is ever seeking to set them free. To be in a stifling dungeon with darkness and fear is very dreadful. To escape from it and breathe the fresh air of the mountains, or feel the sea breezes, and gaze upon the dawn—this is joy, this is comfort.

We know by revelation that Christ has died for our sins; that the dark sense of fear of deserved punishment, the weary weight of carrying our past evil with us, is removed when, by faith, we associate ourselves with Him who is “Human Nature by representation.” “He has borne our sins, and carried our sorrows; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him;” by His suffering we are set free. This is a great mystery, but we *feel* the need of it. We look with love to a Saviour, we have the comfort of freedom—the penalty is no more. If we seek the

grace of faith, the grace of repentance; in God's giving, in our using, then we feel the comfort of freedom. Sin also ties us by creating *habits*; of ourselves we feel that we are too feeble to break them off. Painful and slow is the process of reversing an evil habit. Sloth, untruth, impurity, dishonesty, worldliness, selfishness, will *take hold* of a soul which has given way, and it needs a strong man to break them. Christ is strong. He is the giver of Grace. By Him, habit, however inveterate, may be broken. If we turn to Him, trembling and fearful, indeed, but wanting will, and wanting power, He can come, and *does* come, to help, and then, oh! the comfort of Freedom! The Church is the home of Freedom. That great society in which dwells the Presence of Christ is the storehouse of Grace. It is the supernatural home of the soul, stretching far into eternity. "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Oh! the comfort of it! Christ can make us free. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty."

Meditation.

TERRIBLE, O my soul, are the bonds of Sin! How often hast thou acted so that habits have formed, by which thou art bound. Oh! the weariness, the darkness, the imprisonment, all with self, and self only, in its hatefulness. Look up, call to thy Saviour. He will free thee. He will say: "Arise!" "I will, be thou clean." Blessed Saviour! Oh! the comfort of the voice of the Deliverer.

*Mighty Master, strong Deliverer,
Still we turn for grace to Thee ;
Speak the word, unbar the dungeon,
Let our captive souls go free.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who hast sent Thy dear Son to deliver those who are bound: Grant that, by His grace, we may be freed from the bands of our sins: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Comfort of Peace.

TEXT.—“*The God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.*”—ROM. xv. 13.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

“THE blessing of Peace” is sought for by all men. War itself, which is in this world often a duty and a dire necessity, is waged—when rightly waged—for the bringing of peace. The absence of disturbance,

the opportunity, unmolested, to fulfil ordinary duties, these are things desired by all.

But there is more than absence of external disturbance needed. *That*, indeed, in this world, we can never wholly hope to have. There is a real Peace which may be with all sorts of external consequence and disturbance. This is the Peace of Christ. It was one of the special promises of our Lord that He would give this Peace to His people. "Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you." Then closely associated with His Resurrection Victory was the Gift of Peace. "He breathed on them and said, Peace be unto you." In His life on earth He taught of this by His miracles. When the lake rose under the violence of the gale, and when the disciples, waking and fearful, cried to Him, He said, "Peace, be still," and there was a great calm. (1) We need *intellectual* peace. It is not that *all* difficulties of Belief disappear in a moment. It is not, perhaps, meant that they should. *They* are part of our discipline. But the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ lays down some clear lines. These guide us. These constitute "the Faith once delivered." The intellect is vigorous and active, like the intellect of the mathematician reasoning from definitions and axioms—but it is not disturbed as to *first principles*. There is the calm, untroubled mind, resting on revelation, and so at peace to deal with difficulties and learn new lessons, and find that "ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt." (2) Again, we need peace of conscience. Conscience can bring anguish deeper and sharper than a bodily wound. A conscience which is witnessing against our choices and

actions, and bearing the burden of a sinful Past, is a disturbing force. Christ brings Peace to this. Repentance and Faith call out in sorrow and longing. Christ hears, answers, we are forgiven. Again and again we may have to go to Him. Again and again we may have to make our confessions. There is power to forgive. The word of Absolution is Christ's word of Power, won by His sacrifice : " Go in Peace."

(3) Further, we need peace in our affections. God gives us dear objects of affection. The heart is wrapped round some other heart. Then come pangs, partings, sorrow, death ; but if true affection be carried to God, consecrated in Christ, it means something, it means much. There may be acute sorrows and terrible disappointments, yet Christ is able to raise, use, calm, deepen, sanctify, love. Christ says, " Peace, be still."

And we must remember this Comfort of Peace is found, by Grace, in the advancing life. It is well said, " The calmness to which God is always leading us consists in a perfect poise of tasks and powers. . . . Here is a life at low rest (as we may say). It acknowledges few responsibilities and finds in itself the power to fulfil them all. Now, let a new duty press itself upon that life, a new emotion, a new experience of any kind, before untried. The first result is a disturbance. The demands and the powers are thrown out of poise. But by-and-bye, the power comes up to meet the new task. The two are harmonised on a higher level." There is a loftier calm attained : God's grace sought brings peace. There is " grace to help in time of need." Strength comes

when wanted to those who seek God. There is labour; there is effort; there is also, however, the Comfort of Peace.

Meditation.

SIN has disturbed me. Conscience has made my life full of unrest. Sorrow has broken me. Looking down I am in unquiet. Let me fly to God. "He giveth men grace." O troubled heart! O saddened life! trust all to Him. Christ will give the sinner "Peace that passeth all understanding."

*Peace, blessed Peace, can come from Jesus
To a heart weighed down by ill,
Worn with sorrow, racked with anguish,
He brings comfort. "Peace, be still."*

Prayer.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all comfort, by Thy grace and help give me, give us all, *Thy* Peace: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday after the Fourth Sunday.

Morning.

The Comfort of Advance.

TEXT.—“*The Path of the Just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the Perfect Day.*”—PROV. iv. 18.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

LIFE is shown by growth. A true soul desires to advance. There is no ambition so noble as that which lies in the heart of every true man who is trying to do his duty and serve God—the desire to be better.

One of the powers of comfort of God's grace is the comfort of knowing that, faithful to Him, we must advance. There are guidances which come to us.

(1) We advance by clinging to *principles*. Principles are truths which apply to all times, to all circumstances. When those truths are grasped in the soul they expand before the mind and enter into the will.

It is a *principle* that dishonesty is wrong ; that courage and truth and self-sacrifice are right. It is a religious *principle* that we must seek God in prayer : that we must, when it is possible, communicate in the Body and Blood of Christ. Principles, gripped firmly and held bravely, expand, and we learn how to apply them, and so to grow. (2) We advance by an honest use of *experience*. Each of us has an experience all his own. It is the application to the living, single, responsible being of the facts it meets with in life. To use experience religiously and in the fear and love of God is to advance. We go from "strength to strength." Life becomes more real, deep, interesting, serious. It is a real use of God's grace, helping the soul on in this way. (3) We advance by helping others. That is, by realising, in some degree, our brotherhood in Christ. This does not imply teaching or argument or reproof. Those *may* be needed. Those *may* come in. It implies acting on solid principle—accepting, in innocent and ordinary matters, the teaching and guidance of our time, our country, those around us, but keeping steadily to the standard of truth and duty which God has given us. Strength and tenderness are the marks of a true man. To take care, by grace, to deepen tenderness, first to those whose claim comes first, then to all who need. To take care to reinvigorate strength, by thoughtfulness, by faithfulness, by prayer—this is a certain mode of advance. By God's grace, this is certain : if we seek Him in all things, by repentance for Sin, by use of the means of grace, by faithfulness to duty—duty in ordinary things, duty in religious exercises—we shall

grow and advance in power and knowledge and strength in the soul's life.

As we climb the hill and turn, from moment to moment, to look back, the landscape opens out more clearly, more widely extended before us. When we reach the crown, we see beyond as well as behind. So truth, and duty, and the knowledge of God, and the sense of the real though unseen, are mastered by the faithful effort to obey God's will and to use His grace.

Then comes in the soul the whisper of God's encouragement, "Well done, good and faithful." Pride is gone. Humility itself increases, for the more we achieve, the more we feel how all failure comes from mere self, how all success comes from leaning on God. There is no doubt that in a faithful, trustful life there is *advance*. There is no standing still, but righteousness develops into strength and holiness. A manly Christianity is the true following of Christ. To follow, not the voice of a crowd, but to correct all the theories and standards of those around us by the voice of revelation, by the voice of Conscience; not to judge others, to learn from others, but to act and think with the independent sense of one's own responsibility; to seek *to do right*, to do God's will, as brought home by His Spirit through the teachings, the experiences, the conscientious warnings and encouragements we have had—is to *advance*. Imperceptibly, but surely, we go on. God's grace is being used, and God gives us the comfort of knowing and feeling that we are drawing nearer and nearer to Him.

Meditation.

SOMETIMES cynical, and contemptuous of others' opinions, sometimes too easily swayed by them, turn, my soul, to the teachings of experience, the words of Conscience, to loyalty to principle, to seeking God. Thou canst so advance, and God will give thee the comfort of knowing thou art nearer to Him.

*“ Through the night of doubt and sorrow,
Onward goes the Christian band;
Singing songs of expectation,
Marching to the promised land.”*

Prayer.

O LORD and Heavenly Father, who ledest Thy people onward if they seek Thee, lead Thou on. Give me, give us all, grace to follow where Thou ledest, to use experience, obey Conscience, hold and practise Thy holy Faith, and so have the comfort of Thy grace, teaching us that we are ever advancing nearer to Thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Comfort of Trust.

TEXT.—“ *Mine eyes look unto Thee, O Lord God ; in Thee is my trust.*”—Ps. cxli. 9.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be

punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

THERE is no greater comfort, probably, in human life, than the possession of those we love who can be trusted. If we feel the stress of life, we want one or another who can care for us and be

“Strongest on the longest day.”

The greatest sorrow in life, perhaps, is to find that our trust is misplaced, that our trust has been betrayed. The reason is that on the one hand the soul is indeed alone; but on the other, we are not alone. The first unit of society is not the individual, it is the family. When we come into this world we find ourselves *in a relation* to others. We do not *make* the relation of parent to child, and child to parent, of brother and sister allied to one another—we *find* it, we are *in* it. Where this relation is nobly accepted and acted upon there grows more and more the sense of *trust*. Even though we each have our individuality, we cannot stand alone. We are dependent upon others in a thousand ways, first in the family, then in the larger circle of social hives and duties. The very bond of society and of a civilised state is some mutual trust. There are relations as of affection, of marriage, which are of choice. Here, also, for any true and happy relation to exist and go on, there must be trust. In some cases, whether in the family or in larger circles of life, some hearts are

drawn by mutual affinities to one another, and as "the play of the affections" is the real joy of life, so deepening *trust* is the core of the affections. Thorough mutual love has its joy—even when parting brings sorrow—in the great trust we place in one we love who loves us. Parents and child may be separated by oceans and continents, yet the tie of a strong love means the joy of unfaltering trust. This is so by the guidance and ruling and loving-kindness of God. It points to that on which it rests, and of which it is an image ; it points to the trust of the soul in God.

Holy Scripture is full of the glorious truth. Nowhere does it come out with greater clearness than in the Psalms. Trust in God, they remind us, is of the essence of the religious character. "Here," it has been well said, "we have before us what devotion is, and what are the emotions and affections which feed it, and what is its natural language. . . . Here we are especially taught 'what, indeed, God is to the soul in all its many needs.'" The soul learns, here, to own God as its Hope and Refuge, and Guide, and Shepherd. "The God of my strength," says the Psalmist, "the help of my countenance, and my God." The soul "thirsts and longs" for the living God. The world is a world of unsatisfied longings. In God it finds satisfaction. It is a grace, a duty, a joy *to trust God*. It is a grace. God gives it and increases it in answer to prayer. It is a duty. From Him we came, to Him we go. He is Goodness itself. He has revealed Himself to us as our Father. He has taught us that "the very hairs of our head are

all numbered"; that He "careth for us"; that our cry "enters into His ears"; that—wonderful as it seems—nothing which concerns us is a matter of indifference to Him. It is "the soul recognising God's righteousness," God's nearness, God's care as . . . "the great reality of human life, which gives meaning and substance to its shadowy nothingness." Life must be full of trial; it must have many sorrows; it must face vicissitudes, dangers, partings, disappointments, death. Where does it find support? By trusting God. If we trust Him, if we keep near Him—though the way may *seem* dark and perplexing, and disappointing—He will ever guide us, "and never guide us wrong." "The rush, the sweep of the flood of gladness, that, in spite of all interruptions of distress and fear, pours through the Book of Psalms, filling our earthly days with Glory and Hope, and making us feel that, short and few as they are, vain and incomplete as they seem, *that* can be no poor and worthless a life which man passes under the 'shadow of the wings of God,' sheltered and guided by Him whose 'righteousness is like the strong mountains, and His judgment like the great deep'"—this may be ours if, seeking to serve God, we trust Him. In a world so full of trial and perplexity, what a vast, what an unspeakable and unfathomable comfort is trust in God.

Meditation.

OFTEN has my heart sunk! Often have I doubted and feared amidst the many trials of life! O my soul! put thou thy trust in God, which is the help of thy countenance, and thy God.

*Though the heart be sick with sorrow,
Though the life be dark with care ;
Sad to-day or dark to-morrow
Face in trust, thy God is there.*

Prayer.

O LOVING Father, who hast shown us Thy goodness in Jesus Christ, give me grace, give us all grace, in all sorrow, trial, work, in life, in death, to trust in Thee : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday.

Morning.

The Comfort of Strength.

TEXT.—“*Unto Thee, O my strength, will I sing: for Thou, O God, art my refuge and my merciful God.*”—PS. lix. 17.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

THE more we are honest in dealing with ourselves, the more we know ourselves, the more we are certain of our utter weakness.

Man is weak in body. However strong our physical frame may be, or appear to be, a breath, a touch, some slight accident, may bring it to the dust. Our minds may be strong and clear, but we find, at times, we know not why, they will not act and work with clearness and precision. One day they are powerful, energetic, strong; another, we cannot

wring a thought from them. Much has come, doubtless, by our diligence, thought, labour ; but this itself seems at times impossible. Our wills seem, above all, to be not merely our possessions, but our central selves, the very "I" that determines and speaks and guides. Yet nothing can, at times, be weaker or more treacherous than the human will. The clear-minded are sometimes clouded ; the diligent are sometimes dragged at by an attacking lethargy ; the strong-willed are sometimes wavering. The more we know ourselves the more we know our weakness.

Then in matters of the spiritual life, how true this is ! What a yawning chasm there is between resolve and achievement ! How bright, clear, certain, truth and duty appear sometimes ! How perplexed and dark and cloudy at other times ! We may be the victims of varying moods. We all know how joyful, hopeful, easy, prayer or communion may be one day, how distasteful another ! We are weak and varying, some certainly more than others, but all in some degree. Where is strength to be found ?

That is the cry. We need strength. Yes, and if we will, we have it. God is our strength. To look to Him is to find that even in darkness or weakness we can hold on to *principle* ; that darkness *then* is only passing ; that "out of darkness He bringeth light."

This is a true, a real comfort, in two cases of our earthly trial. (1) This is true in *temptation*. No one ever yet swiftly looked to God and failed. He cannot force Himself upon us, but there He is,

ready to help, ready to strengthen, ready to save. We know this by revelation ; we know it, if we will, by experience. When we have cried to Him, even in weakness and a faith only weak, we find ourselves surprised at the way in which we have been carried, victorious, over temptation. (2) Again, this is so in anxiety, in trouble, in sorrow. We are unable to see our way. We fly to Him. We find ourselves guided. We are vexed, perplexed, disturbed ; we are inclined to "fret ourselves" ; we remember that we are sure to be "led to do evil" ; we put down the fretting temper ; we "fall to prayer." A calm comes. We see things in truer proportion. We are in sorrow ; the heart is aching, breaking. We turn to Him. Still the heart may ache and break, still human hearts suffer from human sorrow, but it is different when we fly to Him. We feel we have a refuge. We gain strength to bear, to bear nobly ; to feel sure He will take care of those we love ; He will make the wound bearable ; He will teach us—learning sad lessons—still "to play the man." "What I do thou knowest not now," He says ; "thou shalt know." "You," He says, "love much, and so have bitter sorrow. I love more. I will see to it all." We are brave or we are strong. O Thou Strength of our help ! O Thou strong and loving God ! Thou art our Refuge. We have the endless Comfort of Almighty Strength.

Meditation.

How miserably weak I have been, failing before temptation, trusting in myself ! How my will has

failed, and my heart been not only sorry—that it often must be—but untrustful! God is thy strength. Turn to Him. Look to Him. Jesus shows thee the love of the Father. Find comfort in His strength.

*“Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;
Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why:
He thinks he was not made to die;
And Thou hast made him; Thou art just.”*

Prayer.

O GOD of Might and Majesty, Thou hast revealed Thyself as our Father. Give us Thy grace in all trial. Be Thou to me, to all of us, unfailing strength: for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

The Comfort of Strength.

TEXT.—“*Be strong, and He shall establish your heart, all ye that put your trust in the Lord.*”—PS. xxxi. 27.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be

punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

GOD is our strength. God, who is nearer to each of us than any creature is, has revealed to us, by His dear Son, that He loves us; that He knows our weakness; that He is ready to be "a very present help in time of trouble."

What is our duty? A duty, if faithfully fulfilled, becomes a comfort, and in this case so it is. It becomes a comfort because it is a response to God's grace given, and doing the will of God always brings comfort.

Strength is a duty. We are bound to be strong. We are apt to think we cannot help weakness. It is true we cannot help being creatures, weak in many ways; but God comes to our assistance, and our duty is to co-operate with the Grace of God. Hardness is not a duty. Callousness is not a duty. It is no duty not to feel a natural shrinking from pain. It is no duty not to feel and to suffer from sorrow. Heartlessness is not a duty. Indeed, the nearer we are to the perfect Humanity the more we shall feel. "He *suffered* being tempted." He wept at the grave of Lazarus. His heart was wrung at the betrayal. He was "in an agony" before His Passion. Some may conquer temptation, at least for a time, by Pride. Some may escape from sorrow by hardening the heart and trying to forget. This is not the case with a true and deep character. This is never a mark of

nobility, but of smallness of nature. It is a duty, to see to it that temptation shall not lead to sin, no matter how we suffer. It is a duty not to allow sorrow, however deep and heart-breaking, to stop us from doing what we ought. There is plenty to hinder, plenty to scare, plenty to bring pain to us in this sad life. We are bound *to exert ourselves*. The heavens may have faded from their beauty ; the sun may have lost its brightness ; the flowers their colour ; the stars may have been setting in our firmament, Life may have changed. Grey and cloudy it may be. Some old plans miscarried ; some wise purposes come to nothing ; some cherished hopes been blown away like autumn leaves before the gale ; some dear face disappeared beyond the dimness of distance, or below the darkness of the grave. Yes, but our duty is to *be strong*. Sad we may have to be, but all these trials are *possessions*. They may deepen character. They may help another by our greater gentleness, wisdom, sympathy, self-restraint. They may be to the glory of God. They may drive us more to prayer. They may teach us greater unselfishness and a nobler humility. If the heart aches, if the heart breaks, we Christians must be strong. We have to be strong for others. We have to be strong in order to fulfil better than ever God's claims upon us. We have to be strong because we belong to a "better country, even an heavenly," where wrong shall be righted, where injustices be corrected ; where duty and delight shall be at one ; where there shall be no more temptations, no more perplexities, no more partings—where "sorrow and mourning shall

flee away." Strength is a duty, and with it God brings the grace of His comfort.

Meditation.

MANY a time, trusting in self, have I been weak before temptation, under trial, under affliction. How blessed to know God's grace is ever ready to help. I will, by that grace, do my duty. Listen, O my soul ! to the Apostle's words : " Quit you like men, be strong."

*" Never turn your back but march breast forward ;
Never doubt that clouds will break ;
Never think, though Right be worsted, Wrong will
triumph ;
Hold you fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."*

Prayer.

O GOD of Strength and Pity, comfort me, comfort us all, by Thy Grace, and help us in all sorrow, trial, temptation, to be, in Thy strength, strong : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Thursday after the Fourth Sunday.

Morning.

The Comfort of Prayer.

TEXT.—“*In everything with Prayer . . . let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God shall keep your hearts.*”

—PHIL. iv. 6.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

PRAYER is an unspeakable blessing. It is, to any really religious mind, much, very much, to be able to ask God, as a trusting child would ask a father, for what he wants. It helps the soul, this confidence of asking. Prayer is also a great mystery. To pray is to exercise a real power. Many difficulties are made about Prayer, but then difficulties *must* arise—in our present state of knowledge—about all truths “half revealed and half concealed,” *i.e.* about all mysteries.

These things are revealed: (1) Prayer is a real duty.

We are exhorted in every page of the New Testament to perform this duty. If we are obedient children of God we must pray. (2) The *reiterated* urging upon God our requests is a duty, and has a power. This our Lord reveals as part of the divine plan for governing the world. "Men ought always to pray and never faint," or relax or give in; and our Lord uses the boldest possible illustration, such as we should never have dared to use ourselves: "Because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as much as he needeth." We are taught to ask, and ask with such earnestness and persistence as can be compared to *knocking* at a closed door, in order to have it opened. (3) We are taught to pray about "everything." There is no want we have which is too small for God's attention. (4) We are to pray *abiding* in Christ, and Christ's words abiding in us. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." That is, being Christians, we must be to Christ as the heart is to the head and body, as the child to the father, one with Him in wish and will: then our praying will be powerful; we shall *will* what must be given. (5) We are taught, indeed, that *all* prayer earnestly, that is really, prayed will be heard and answered, according to God's will. We do not wish it otherwise. We may mistake what is best for us; God will hear and answer, but answer in a better way. A father asks for guidance for his son, plans his future, carries it on; a change comes, a future totally different opens, and the father's original thoughts and plans are upset. Does he think that

God has not heard his prayers? Surely not! He has heard and answered and guided, but in a better way. We ask, desiring God's will to be done, and He gives "more than we either ask or think." We are to ask about *everything*, but one class of requests will be not only granted, but *exactly* granted. We know that God's will is our sanctification. To pray for spiritual blessings and graces is to be sure of an *exact* answer—"He giveth His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." A mysterious power, then, resides in Prayer. It enters into God's scheme for the government of the world. It is a duty. It is a privilege. It brings peace to the soul and a great confidence. Among the many comforts of God's grace is the Comfort of Prayer.

Meditation.

Too often have I wasted grace, and lost opportunities, by allowing a perfunctory spirit of "saying my prayers" without sufficient *effort* of real praying. Cold and thoughtless hast thou been, O my soul! Rise to the thought of the privilege, the power, the Comfort of Prayer.

*When we smile in joy, when sorrow
Makes us smart beneath the rod;
Oh! the Comfort, Power and Blessing,
Still to cast our care on God.*

Prayer.

HEAVENLY Father, who, by Thy dear Son, hast taught us the duty of prayer, give us grace, in faith

and love and hope, to ask as we need, and give us such things as please Thee and are profitable for our salvation: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Comfort of Communion with God.

TEXT.—“*And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.*”—EX. xxxiii. 11.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

PRAYER may be thought of as petition for something we want; and so it is. There is more than this. The soul needs God. As we try to do our duty and persevere in the straight path of a holy life, we feel more and more the longing for God. “As the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God; when shall I

come to appear before the presence of God." This is the cry of the soul.

This is more and more satisfied by communion with God. There may be, and should be around us, in us, an atmosphere of prayer. In the midst of the most engrossing tasks, there may be the habit of communion with God. If we love people very dearly we love to share with them our best thoughts, our greatest pleasures. As we grow to love God, we love to share our thoughts deliberately with Him. This increasing and then ceaseless spirit of prayer gives a *tone* to the whole life. We cannot be students of great authors without, in some measure, catching their style. We cannot be in pleasant and kindly company without to some degree catching its tone. So it is with God. The heart that constantly and habitually seeks his company, and makes Him a sharer in all its projects and desires, gains itself seriousness, calmness, gentleness, generosity, indignation at wrong, love of sinners, strength.

And this God invites us to. It is wonderful, but it is certain that He yearns for our love. "My son, give me thy heart," He says. "The Lord's delight is in them that fear Him." What comfort in this! "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the Lord." How much more does God Himself comfort the soul that is constantly seeking Him.

We may form the habit of habitual communion with God. (1) We should ask constantly for a real, abiding spirit of prayer. (2) We should pause, perhaps, at certain times in our work or pleasures to make God a partner in them, and to lift up our heart

to Him. Our Father in Heaven answers at once, His Blessed Spirit speaks in the heart. We feel the touch of His tender hand, God comes near to us. At times we feel him very far away, but, if so, He may have withdrawn the full comfort of His Presence for a time, to strengthen faith and deepen longing, and give us higher blessings and greater nearness to Him. (3) We learn to avoid all things, all company, all actions in connection with which we could not seek His company.

The interior life, the deepening the sense of the unseen, the brightening and sanctifying common duties, the courage of perseverance in what is right—all these are enhanced; all these become more vigorous and real by the habit of constant communion with God.

Meditation.

ENTER into thyself, O my soul, and thou wilt find God. Too outward have I often been, carried away by the impressions of an external world. So have I lost strength, peace, comfort, a noble and supernatural tone; so have I neglected God. Let me go more deeply into myself, and in the chambers of the heart meet with and hold commune with God.

*Go, my soul, in joy or sorrow,
Close to One who takes thy part;
Seek thou that sweet, awful Presence,
Rest upon thy Father's heart.*

Prayer.

O GOD and loving Father, draw me by Thy Holy Spirit ever more and more into close communion with Thee. Give me grace in all things ever to live in Thy Presence, and speak to Thee of all my needs and joys and sorrows, with trust and humility and love. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Friday after the Fourth Sunday.

Morning.

The Comfort of Intercession.

TEXT.—“*I exhort, therefore, that, first of all . . . intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men.*”—1 TIM. ii. 1.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved : through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

WE are permitted, indeed we are taught, not only to pray, but to pray for others. God brings to us the comforts of His grace by allowing us, enjoining us, to exercise intercession.

It is a mysterious fact, but a fact it is, that the salvation, the spiritual as well as temporal needs, of others are greatly dependent upon us. We do not stand alone; we are able to affect others much in life by influence; we are able to do more than we can ever imagine by intercession.

(1) We are reminded by this of the unity of the Church, the Body of Christ. "If one member suffer, all members suffer with it; if one member be honoured, all rejoice with it." The Article of the Creed which teaches us of "the Holy Catholic Church" reminds us of this unity and duty on earth. The Article "the Communion of Saints" reminds us that all the goodness and prayers and love of holy persons, here and in another world, is that of which all, in a sense, have a common share. We are closely bound together in the Church. All our prayers and efforts for the Kingdom of God affect the well-being of the whole body; and the prayers of others who serve God, and are, like ourselves, members of Christ's Body, affect us. This is one of the meanings of "Common Prayer."

By intercession we put forth a power which lies in the Body of Christ. We exercise our right, our strength, as members of that Body. For ourselves, the exercise of this great duty and function helps us to realise our true place in the Church, our dignity, or office. We feel these two things: (1) We "*have come* to Mount Zion, the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, . . . and to Jesus." We realise that we are "a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people." And (2) we learn this: that "we are encompassed about by a great cloud of witnesses," of martyrs, of those who have held the Faith, and suffered for it; who have loved God and witnessed to Him.

(2) It is intercession which not only enables us to

take our part, most efficiently, with the good and holy, but also to *feel* that we are not alone. If the world is evil ; if Sin abounds ; if it is difficult, apparently, to fight effectively for Right and Justice and Truth ; if many seem careless, and things seem to go against God's Kingdom—we know that, in intercession we have a mighty weapon to wield, and that we are ourselves encouraged, helped, united with those throughout the Church on earth and in the unseen world—who are exercising that vast and blessed power which God has given. Thus, in intercession there comes before us a glorious vision, and the sense of a mighty power. In it God gives us that comfort which is to those who are helping on His Kingdom ; who are doing their duty ; who are not alone in the struggle.

Meditation.

How often, O my soul, hast thou felt weak and weary and lonely ! To be alone, to struggle in vain, seemed depressing, useless. Stir up thy faith. Ask God to open thine eyes as the young man at Dothan. Interceding for others, thou art one of a powerful band of workers for God.

*Look, like the Prophet, from the mountain ;
Beneath, the battle rages there,
Then raise Thine hands in interceding,
And do Thy warrior's part, by prayer.*

Prayer.

GRANT to me, O Lord, to us all, the spirit of intercession. Help us so to act as true members of the

Body of Christ, and grant us comfort in realising our place in the battle, and our union with those who fight for Thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Comfort of Intercession.

TEXT.—“*I exhort, therefore, that, first of all . . . intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men.*”—1 TIM. ii. 1.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

WHEN we exercise the office of intercessors, we are specially near to Christ. Christ our Master is (1) by nature, the great High Priest, the great interceder. In Him are united the two Natures, the Divine and the Human. We approach the Divine Nature through the Humanity of Christ. “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” He has gone through our human experience. He can sympathise with our human trials; by His new *nature*—the God-Man—He intercedes for us. In intercession we

take our part with Christ ; we join in His mediatorial work. Our prayers gain power as they are united with His, who pleads for us and with us, as our great elder brother, the Head of our Humanity.

(2) This is intensely so when we join in offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Here is "the Church's Great Prayer Meeting." Here with all the Baptised who devoutly join, we present before God the one sacrifice, once offered in suffering and sorrow on the cross. Thus we "show the Lord's death" before the eyes of God the Father ; thus we plead the merits of the Passion of Christ ; thus we take our place with Him as intercessor, and with Him pray for our brethren.

(3) But God our Father gives us a further comfort when He gives us grace to intercede. Our Father in Heaven has given to us our human affections. "Love is of God." All real love is His best gift. It is He that has given us those who love us and those whom we love. With love, in human life, is constantly wedded sorrow. No true heart has truly loved without having to undergo the pain of sacrifice. Partings must come in life. Sometimes those who are dear to us are separated by distance, or by intervening years. Sometimes they are hidden in the grave.

"For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart ;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak."

So feels the human heart. Now in one way we can help those with whom we have parted. Oceans and continents may come between, but the bond of love

may still be strong. We meet in Christ, and *we* can intercede, and blessings and help and grace be poured upon them.

In this way we can help the Dead. More alive than we, their voices rise in prayer for us, and ours must rise for them. We need their intercession for strength and protection amid the dangers and temptations of life. They need ours for the cleansing of the remnants of sin, for rest and light and advance in another world.

If we seek and gain the grace of an interceding spirit, what a comfort, too, for our own souls! When the heart is wrung with anguish, when partings have brought their bitter pangs, oh! the comfort of knowing that still, in God's mercy, and by His command, we may help those whom here we cannot see, whose voice the distance makes too weak even for the straining ear of love.

Meditation.

BLESSED be God, who has given me the right, and laid on me the duty, of interceder for those I love who are far away, or passed through the gates of Death. Be glad, O my soul, that thou, even thou, mayest take part with thy Saviour in this exercise of comfort and love.

*And can we help the dear soul gone,
Whose body sleeps beneath the sod?
Or help a loved one far away?
Prayer reaches through the heart of God.*

Prayer.

O LOVING Father, we thank Thee for teaching us to pray for those we love. Give us the grace of earnest intercession, and hear our prayers for them, and comfort our hearts by Thy grace : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday after the Fourth Sunday.

Morning.

The Comfort of Victory.

TEXT.—“*We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*”—ROM. viii. 37.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

LIFE is a battle. If we are truly awake to the world we live in, to the weakness and sinfulness of our own hearts, we feel that we must struggle.

(1) We must struggle against wickedness in the world. We are not here to dream; we are responsible, each in our own little way, for trying to leave this sad world happier, this evil world better than we found it. Each of us, in some degree, must have the ambition to be an “Alter Christus”—another Christ.

This means real struggle. This, however, let us not think so much of now.

(2) There is another struggle. It has been truly said, "Inside all the other battles we are fighting, there is the battle with ourselves. Inside of the battle with the world for the world, which the great champions of righteousness are fighting in their great way," and which we are fighting in our little way, "there lies the battle which every true man is always fighting with himself." It is a great mystery. It is also a fact. We have a double self—a higher and a lower. We are able to look at ourselves, to appraise our conduct, to take stock of our actions. Ever there is the Devil's standard thrusting itself forward, and before our eyes is what we know to be the standard of Christ.

The battle rages with ups and downs. It is slow work fighting; we have traitors in the camp in a deceitful heart and a weak will. Habits have been formed, and the chain of habit is difficult to break. Slowly, slowly, effort is made; we seem to be advancing, we seem to have gained a step or two, then comes temptation and the enemy triumphs again.

What is the Christian's duty? *Never* finally to surrender. Still there must be repentance. Still there must be confession. Still there must be prayer. Still there must be again the painful fresh beginnings. Once things seemed so easy; now they are harder and harder. *No Surrender!* that is *the* cry. This habit *must* be broken. This enemy *must* be beaten. Better die fighting than surrender.

Whom do we think of then? Whom may we think

of? Christ. He is still our Redeemer. He is still the Deliverer. He is still the Giver of Grace. He is still our Ideal. We thought life was made to be easy. We are roused up to find it hard.

Then comes crushing sorrow. Our heavens are darkened with clouds of Care or storm of Anguish. Is it any use doing anything but giving up *all* struggle? *No Surrender!* again is the cry from Heaven. A true soul goes on ; and lo ! it is enabled to bear, to do. There is a brighter light ; there is an advance. The soul awakes to find itself nearer God. Oh ! the comfort of Victory over Self. " More than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Meditation.

FEAR not, O my soul ! " Be not afraid, only believe." The strife is difficult. Sorrows are crushing. There is One with thee, in sorrow, in temptation, in the sharpest trial. Christ feels for thee. Look up, ask, cry, struggle and fight. Victory *must* come to thee if thou follow and cling to Christ.

*Iesu, Master, King of Glory,
Still to Thee we turn for Life ; -
Master, when the battle's sorest,
Oh ! sustain us in the strife.*

Prayer.

O LORD JESUS, leave us not, leave me not in sorrow or struggle. Give me Thy strength. Give me victory : for Thy merits and mercy. Amen.

Evening.

The Comfort of Perseverance.

TEXT.—“*Let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*”—GAL. vi. 9.

Collect.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Thy grace may mercifully be relieved : through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

HUMILITY is the basis of the spiritual life. By Humility the soul feels its own nothingness and God's greatness, and leans upon God. Humility *makes room* for God. It is not mock undervaluing of one's gifts or powers. It is the spirit which makes us feel their value, *because* they are God's gifts, and to be used for Him. It is the spirit which makes us *realise facts*. We are nothing in ourselves. All that we have, all that we are—these are God's, except the sin we have added. Humility is a foundation grace. It is also a promise and guarantee of a crowning grace. If Humility is a fundamental grace, the crown of all graces is Perseverance. God, who gives richly the comfort of His grace, can alone give this. This is *the* comfort of all comforts, to so trust in God that we may hope to “persevere to the end.”

There is much to hinder: (1) We may grow "weary in well doing." Sheer fatigue in struggles against sin, or bearing up against trial, may shake faith. How shall we meet this? Only by flying to God, by looking up to Him, by clinging to Him. (2) Then there is a danger of Presumption—of thinking we can go on without the means God appoints to help us, and can act and conquer in our own strength. Or there is Despondency. We may look down instead of up. Like the climber in the mountains, we may fix our eyes upon the chasm instead of raising them to the crest. How shall we meet these?

The answer is by Hope. By that great form of manly strength which enables the soul to ride at anchor in the storm. Hope is strong, for Hope claims God's promises. "It is a deliberate counter-appeal"—against the forces of presumption on the one hand, or despondency on the other—"to that mighty power which disposes, with such mysterious influence, of so much of human life. It is an endeavour to subject imagination to truth and reason and God." It is a *duty to hope*. Whatever difficulties, sorrows, temptations, failures, there may be, we, if we are looking to God, know that His grace is all-prevailing, that the "comfort of His grace" is offered to us, that we may, by that grace, persevere.

For, indeed, Hope drives to prayer. Prayer is the voice of Hope. If we pray, according to God's will, we *know* we shall be heard and helped. It *is* His will—that we know—that we should act worthily, should be saved. Those who pray for the grace of perseverance—they will certainly persevere. Oh!

the joy of knowing this rests on God's promise, on God's help, on "the comfort of His grace."

Meditation.

Look up, O my soul ! however dark be life, however sore be temptation. Look up and hope in God. Persevere thou shalt, if pray thou wilt. Lean on the comfort of God's grace.

Dark is trial ; sharp is sorrow—

Ah ! the Soul may fail through fear :

Trust God gives a bright to-morrow,

Pray for grace to persevere.

Prayer.

O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of many and great dangers, give me, give us all, grace to cling to Thee and persevere : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Passion Sunday.

Morning.

Christian Character.—God and the Soul.

TEXT.—“*O God ! Thou art my God.*”—PS. cxviii. 28.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE Passion of Jesus Christ is a revelation of perfect Christian character. The active and suffering life was crowned by a death of activity and suffering. Doing and suffering make up life. To do well and to suffer well is to be a Christian.

One thought stands prominent before the mind which is sincerely religious. It governs all other thoughts. It is the thought of God—“*O God ! Thou art my God.*” In the human mind of Christ this thought governed. Even in the most terrible crisis of the forsakenness it was “*My God !*” He cried. See how this thought governs in a true life.

To form and reform character may be said to be *the*

work of life. It is character, so formed or reformed, which alone can be carried beyond the grave. To see defects in character we need light. We see our own defects the more we live in thought of God. We may be gifted, for instance, with natural activity. We may think much that we do is high and noble and from self-sacrifice. Let the thought of God come in. We think of His calmness, His majesty, His nearness. We learn to calm merely natural, until it become spiritual, activity. Think of impatience and irritation. These often come from pride and want of self-control. Others afflict us by their ways. How have we not afflicted God? He is "a righteous Judge, strong and patient, and God is provoked every day." We learn patience, self-government. What are the little irritations under the light of the great thought of God? Sweetness, gentleness, calmness, a certain equality of temper—these may be needed. It is the increasing sense of God's greatness enwrapping the Soul, of His goodness caring for the Soul, which lends power for these.

Few things are more important than to keep the inner self calm. Then we can see in a clear light. Then, when trouble comes it does not carry us off our feet, or whirl us away, helpless, before the storm. We may have to suffer; we may have to thread our way through perplexities; yet, the inner self may be still—why? "When I am in trouble I will think on God. When my heart is hot within me, I will complain," not *of* God, but calmly *to* God. This stillness of Soul means strength for all things, like the gigantic strength of the fathomless ocean. The outer

surface may be swept with winds—beneath them is calm. This inner quietude and strength means a near sense of, thought of—God.

This is the primary Christian thought, whatever else be in this vast universe. The Soul stands face to face with God. There is a dim sense of the mystery of the Past : He is there. There is the struggle of the Present : “ God is on my right hand, I shall not greatly fall.” There is the Future, dim, unknown, dark with possibilities of fear and sorrow. There is the providence and love of God. There is the sense of beauty. All has come from God. There are dear affections and cruel partings and cutting sorrows : God knows. “ He doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.” There is change : the sovereignty of God stands sure. First Beginning ! Last End ! The Christian knows around him are the Everlasting Arms. Life is toned by the great thought of God.

Meditation.

MY GOD ! Thou art mine ! I am near Thee, as near no other. On Thee I rest : from Thee I come : to Thee I go. Fill me with the sense of Thy Presence ; so shall I live and work and suffer and die in Thee.

*Strong the Soul, in truth, in calmness,
Still with strength and courage blest,
When it learns to know—“ God’s greatness
Flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness, His rest.”*

Prayer.

O GOD ! Great and Wonderful ! Lift my heart to Thee. Help me, help us all, to live in Thy Presence, and do and suffer in Thy strength : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.

Christian Character.—The Soul and God.

TEXT.—“*What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?*”—ST. MATT. xvi. 26.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

EVERY Soul stands alone. “Alone with the Alone.” Its life is energetic action, or patient suffering. The Soul, the self, is being trained here for fuller, larger life. Very wonderful are the ways of training. It has its choice, how and what to use. The first force in a Christian character is the enveloping Presence of God ; the next, the separate value, privilege, responsibility of the Soul. The Soul has *its own* gifts ; must use *its own* talents ; must live *its own* life. The

religious mind sees itself in God's light. It stands face to face with God. Wherever it is, whatever it does, *these two* are together and alone. God, it feels, is near, and takes His part in everything which concerns it.

The Soul can hear God speak. It has a conscience. The Voice of Authority, not mere domination, directs. Not listen to that? What can it listen to? Desire?—the cry of the crowd? The one is feverish with impulse, the other thoughtless and fickle. What profiteth a man to listen to these and not *the* Voice for the Soul?

The world *seems* close to the Soul. All external things are near it, upon it. It must use them, act upon them, but it is separate and above them. It will last and live when they are gone. "This life of ours," it has been said, "locked and dovetailed into the vast framework of social existence, seems so solid that it needs an effort of imagination to think of it shaken. But that effort of imagination Scripture bids us make. It bids us think of ourselves in totally new conditions, in utterly altered relations to all around us: *how* strange, *how* awful we know not, nor ever shall know here. It bids us think of the world itself passing through endless phases till the day of its doom. Search as we will, we can find nothing to rest upon, nothing that will endure the real trial, but—God." "What profiteth" to gain everything, but God? The Soul is made for God. Its life is in God. We may look into ourselves, then, and see how we may choose the highest, how we may live and walk in the Divine Presence, how we

may "use the world, as not abusing it," but not *choose* the world instead of God. Lovely, awful, beautiful, is the Soul's life—passing *through* Time ; not resting in it : doing common duties in an uncommon way ; resting on, looking to, God. In all the crises of life ; in all great joys and great sorrows ; in all the business of life ; in the common work of every day—Christian character deepens by the sense of the Duty, the Responsibility, the Dignity, the Aloneness of the Soul, with what it chooses as its chief possession—God.

Meditation.

O MY soul ! alone and tried and trained in life, how often hast thou mistaken passing things for eternal ! Think, alone with God ! Choose Him ; see, use, all in Him.

*Soul, thou lastest on, though all things
Change, and fade from day to day ;
Choose thy God, who changeth never,
This can never pass away.*

Prayer.

O ETERNAL God, give me light and strength to value that self, that Soul, Thou hast given me to make it all Thine : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Monday after Passion Sunday.

Morning.

Christian Character.—The Moral Law.

TEXT.—“*Thy Law is within my heart.*”—Ps. xl. 8.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

IF we follow Christ, if we earnestly strive to be His servants, we need to have fixed firmly in our minds the claims of Duty as supreme. Not what I *would* but what I *ought*, is the matter to be considered by a Christian. The law of Christ's life and death was this. He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. “First and foremost,” it has been truly said, “. . . stands a strong, clear, moral rule, the unchangeable Law proclaimed on Mount Sinai : those ‘living oracles,’ as St. Stephen calls them, which the great Lawgiver received at his Master's hand, and in

which, after all the changes of thousands of years, the heart of man still hears the voice of God."

God's voice is in conscience. Authority is there, but no coercion. A man may *disobey* his conscience, he may neglect it, put it aside, pervert it. Then the Moral Law speaks, and witnesses, and works. "It was given," it has been well said, "to make us feel and to restrain that moral unsoundness of the Conscience and the Will, which men may keep secret, 'each one in the deep of his heart,' while wishing to serve God, believing that he serves Him."

The true Christian, the really religious man, must *obey* God. There are divine requirements which conflict with our natural wishes, and our easy-going and self-pleasing ways. The moral law comes stern and unbending, but decisive, "Thou shalt not." So it braces, checks, restrains, rouses. "It impressed upon the human mind, for all time, that the indispensable foundation of the religious character was the 'honest and good heart,' obedient, and sincere in its obedience, according to its light, to the moral law, for its own sake, and for the sake of Him who gave it."

Thus, in Christian character, attention to moral precept, to doing what is *right* and *resisting* what is wrong, creates that simplicity of heart, that "single eye" which gains more light, and helps the soul to steer its course confidently through perplexities, and makes both strength and beauty of character. This was developed and made more attractive by our Blessed Lord in His teaching. It was no longer, then, the warning to avoid and omit, and flee from

wrong, the "Thou shalt not"; it was the positive command and urgency towards right, the "I say unto you." And then the attractiveness and beauty of the moral firmament, its many rising, shining, setting stars, its stately order, like the Cosmos, the order of the heavens, became clearer. "Blessed are the meek"; "Blessed are the pure in heart"; "Blessed are the poor in spirit"—these teachings lifted the stern words of the moral law into a brighter light. For this Law of God Christ died. It was the steady and perfect practice of a holy life which led to the Cross. The effort and will faithfully to obey the moral law leads every Christian to some cross, but a crown lies beyond—the crown of a quiet conscience, of a heart at peace with itself and with God, of a character deepened and strengthened in devotion to what is right. God's grace can help weak nature to this, to stern self-rule, obedience to, and, therefore, trust in, God.

Meditation.

SELF-DECEIT has often blinded thee, O my soul! Often thou hast been tempted to ask, "What do I wish?" Not "What am I bound to do?" Listen more earnestly to Conscience. Strive more vigorously to love Right and hate Wrong; to obey and please God in all things.

*Stately, Law-bound worlds around us
Move in Order day and night :
Statelier still the souls, God guided,
Governed by the Law of Right.*

Prayer.

O LORD, Heavenly Father, forgive us all our failures in Duty ; give us grace, with firm resolve, by Thy assistance, to obey and follow Thy holy law : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ebening.**Christian Character.—Enthusiasm for Goodness.**

TEXT.—“*Let Thy saints rejoice in goodness.*”—2 CHRON. vi. 41.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

OUR Lord came and suffered, not only to re-state and act out a law of Righteousness ; not only to teach and show an example of Obedience ; but to “send fire upon the earth,” to kindle, to rouse, a yearning towards high and holy things—an “enthusiasm of Humanity,” indeed, but more an enthusiasm for Goodness.

This, in some degree, marks the Christian character. To claim to be a Christian is, at least, to re-

cognise and acknowledge the glory of Goodness. "The idea of Goodness," it is truly said, "had in Christianity a clear, sharp, decisive primacy, which it never had in any other system, and which surprised and perplexed the world. It was not a word but a thing, deep, complete, fruitful, capable of indefinite expansion and growth. In its action on the world, Christianity, in its design and tendency, may be called the restoration of Goodness . . . to its true place among the objects of human honour and interest, its restoration as a power of wide and real influence in the future education of mankind, in building up character, in redeeming men from unhappiness and ruin."

"He was a *good* man" is the testimony of Holy Scripture to the beautiful character of St. Barnabas. When we feel its power in another, it gives a sense of confidence and rest. It implies a sound and thorough character ; a character which can be trusted, which brings with it a healthy and invigorating atmosphere, and lifts us above all that is vile, demoralising, rank, poisonous, weakening, ruinous, in the moral life. We think of *Sanctity* as something for the most part beyond us in this passing state ; we think of great Saints as lofty examples of the power of God's grace, and faithful response to that grace ; but Goodness we feel to be at once lofty and glorious, and also, by God's help, within reach of us all. It implies soundness of heart, simplicity of purpose, purity of motive, gentleness of character, strength of determination. In this passing scene there are frailties and sins in the best of men, but in vain do the billows

of great temptations break upon the soul of a really *good* man. But

“Merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee.”

It is true, that in fallen man there is still a far reach of distance between the most perfect goodness in the creature and the essential goodness of the Creator. There is still, for all, the need of forgiveness, and the necessity for the cleansing by the “precious blood of Christ”; still, to have an enthusiasm for Goodness to grow in our own souls, in the world around, is to look and long for and learn that which is “the greatest and the highest thing in the world,” which, in its perfection, is “the highest attribute of God.” We may aim at a high standard. We may learn to “love righteousness and hate iniquity”; we may overcome the “sluggishness of will and effort,” too often ours; we may overcome insincerity, hollowness, unsoundness, shallowness, weakness, and *grow better*, and help on Goodness, and so deepen, by grace, a real Christian character.

Meditation.

O MY soul! too often has thine ambition been to please self, to enjoy life, to acquire power, to advance in knowledge! Too often and long hast thou allowed what is unreal, unsound, wrong! Too often *acquiesced* in evil in thyself, in the world! Waken to this in deep penitence, arouse the ambition to be better, the enthusiasm, by grace, for Goodness, as the highest thing.

*"Be good, dear friend, and let who will be clever,
Do noble things, not dream them all day long ;
And so make Life, Death, and that vast 'For Ever,'
One grand, sweet song."*

Prayer.

O LORD and Heavenly Father, free me from all hollowness, self-seeking, untruth, and make me, by Thy grace, to love and advance in, and help on, Goodness : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Tuesday after Passion Sunday.

Morning.

The Christian Character.—The Affections.

TEXT.—“*Love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.*”—I JOHN IV. 7.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

WE climb from the lower to the higher. Even in faults overcome,

“ Men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.”

We must believe that He who has given us “all things richly to enjoy” means “all things” so to be sanctified, disciplined, purified as to lead to Him—the Giver. The “play of the affections” is the happiness of life. The dear objects of affection which

God has given us here are means, if we will, to teach us His love.

Disordered Desire has been the very staple of Sin. Fallen human nature has been wounded in its affections. It is part of the effect of redeeming love to correct the consequences of that wound. It is part of the Christian character to have the affections developed, strengthened, disciplined. One great business of life is to learn to love.

Natural affection is God's gift, and belongs to the Christian character. To fail in that is, St. Paul reminds us, to fail in Religion. Natural affection may and should lead us to, or deepen our love of, God. Religious affection (1) as toned, and trained, and sanctified, love of those near and dear, and of man as man—the circle ever widening—is an element in this character. Then (2), the love of God is taught by His Spirit, through this natural affection; for "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

We have been reminded that "we are in the full burst of religious affections in the Psalms." The Book of Psalms "was the highest expression of them that the world was to see." These affections rise to God. They are the spring of the life of *devotion*. True devotion is not *mere* feeling, much less self-pleasing or sensuous sentiment. It may express itself, as it does, in solemn symbolism and stately ritual, but *it* is the uprising, the overflowings, of the soul, in Prayer, Praise, Meditation, Contemplation — to the good and loving God. It is the voice of tenderness and reverence, the outreaching of the clasping arms of

the trusting and loving child to the Father whom it loves and who has so loved it. That affection, first in small degree, and simple prayer, then increasing as the Holy Spirit gives grace to the soul, and as the experiences of life bring home God's love—is a part of Christian character.

God draws out these affections, both by His merciful warnings of the dangers of Sin and by His marvellous teachings of His love. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." "I am He that comforteth, be not afraid." "Like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him."

Above all, these affections are drawn out by Christ. He came as the very image of the Father's tenderness. The gracious and inexpressible sweetness of His words rang in the ears of men then, and ring in ours now. He blessed and sanctified natural affection by His word and His example, and He showed forth God's love and awakened, by it, the responsive heart of Man. In the Passion of Christ we see the loftiest and deepest expression of that love. By the comfort of God's grace, given by His Spirit, Christian character is made not only strong but tender. We learn to love God

Meditation.

MANY a time has desire been self-seeking. Many a time has selfishness conquered. Thou, O Holy Spirit, canst teach me unselfish, disciplined devotion to the dear objects of affection given me here, by God, and so canst teach me to forget self and love

God. O my soul ! arouse thyself to love God in Christ and to show and strengthen that love by keeping His words, and doing all things, even small things, for and with Him.

*Dark the night of Pain and Sorrow,
Thick the clouds that roll above ;
Dark to-night brings bright to-morrow,
If, in God, we live and love.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who hast loved us, given us earthly blessings, and sent Thy dear Son for us : Pour into our hearts such love towards Thee that we may hate what Thou hatest, and love what Thou dost love : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Christian Character.—Religious Thought.

TEXT.—“ *Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*”—2 COR. x. 5.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE realm of thought is one which is quite our own. Men may imprison the body, they cannot chain the thought. Thoughts may be suggested from without, from those around us, from unseen powers. Thoughts cannot *conquer* us unless we please. They may be refused.

A part of the Christian character is the refinement, the government, the discipline of thought. Fallen creatures as we are, we have had the wound of the Fall also in our *thoughts*. This, too, may be healed. The effects of this may be transfigured by the grace of Christ. St. James speaks of those who do not take generous views and who seek mere human approval as "Judges of evil thoughts." Thought, in any case, is so large and so serious a realm of life that the true treatment of it enters into Christian character. We are reminded by great teachers how the masters of thought in the Old Dispensation possessed, themselves, much of that character. It has been said of the greatest of the Prophets, "His soul is one with his awful Master; he has comprehended something of the greatness and the meaning of Him whose is the world, and before whom the Seraphim veil their faces; the coal from the altar has touched his lips, and his whole being is aflame with zeal, with sympathy, for the greatest of causes, the cause of the Lord of Righteousness and Truth." He had become, "not only by faith and discipline, but by *thought* and knowledge," fitted to follow the teachings which, in fulness, were to come with the Redeemer.

Thought and Reason are enlisted on the side of God. Thought and Reason witness to the greatness of goodness, the power of repentance, the moving fact of personal responsibility, the certainty of the triumph of Righteousness, the fact of future judgment, and future glory. But thought in the individual, personal being, is a power for the soul itself, and for others. To *think* seriously, conscientiously, with painstaking, with self-government, is a high duty. To check wild thoughts—beautiful imaginations are another thing, are fine powers—to check wild thoughts is like holding in, with wisdom and dexterity, an ungoverned steed. To do so is, also, to check wild words. For words are thoughts equipped and sent out to the working world. What danger in wild words! Who does not know it? What power in restrained fire and measured and pregnant thought and speech! Who has not felt it? Thought, rightly disciplined, is a force in Christian character.

We may be tempted to think that there is no room for fiery thought, for moral indignation, for stern words. That is not so. He is no real Christian who cannot be indignant at wickedness. But we are fallen creatures, and such indignation, of thought or speech, must glow with the awful fire of Christ.

Then there is a whole world of personal, passing thoughts—impure, unkind, uncharitable, untrue, dishonourable. These would have, by grace and by force of determination, to be brought under the rule of Christ. Evil thoughts may be flashed by evil powers across the mind. Nothing is ours which is not taken up and adopted by the Will. Then there

are idle thoughts, wandering thoughts in prayer, weakening thoughts. All this realm of living energies the Christian brings—by quiet discipline, by interior looking up to God, by simple effort to do right, by a formed intention to please God, by persevering prayer and God's grace—into the "obedience of Christ." Thought is Soul ruled, and so freed from lawlessness, by seeking and finding "the passion for righteousness, the hatred of iniquity."

Meditation.

THOUGHT I have *allowed* to wander, and to rest on what is evil. O my soul ! dwell on great and beautiful thoughts, in eager, earnest moments of life's struggle ; the grace of quiet, guarded thought, won and used in times of quiet intercourse with God, will come back in force, will be a part of Christian character.

*Bring thy thoughts before thy Master,
Try them, govern, make them pure ;
In these may be grave disaster,
Christ's Rule may, in these, be sure.*

Prayer.

O GOD, who seest our inmost thoughts, give me, give us all, grace to bring everything into obedience to Thy dear Son : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday after Passion Sunday.

Morning.

The Christian Character.—The Loyal Will.

TEXT.—“*Not my will but Thine be done.*”—ST. LUKE xxii. 42.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE Will is the governing power of the soul. In our fallen nature things are confused ; not only the affection and intellect have been wounded, but also the Will. If we are to be Christians indeed, Desire must be subjected to the cross-examination of Conscience, and the Will must decide and enforce the decision accordingly.

The Will, however, has been like a corrupted judge. It is often bribed not to act justly. An essential part of Christian character is a loyal Will.

These feeble wishes are not real exercises of Will. It is one of the mysterious weaknesses of our being that we can feebly *wish* to do right and then *will* to do wrong.

(1) Strength of a loyal Will grows by habits of self-renunciation. Self-renunciation is possible in small things, and, when exercised for good purposes, and for the benefit of others, or for duty, it frees the Will from the shackles of Desire. There have been, indeed, *heroic* self-renunciations of the Saints, but we rather consider those smaller self-renunciations in daily life, which may come of kindness, considerateness, thoughtfulness for others, or desire to fulfil some distasteful duty. These strengthen and fill the soul.

Our Blessed Lord gave up His merely natural *wishes* to a higher Will, and He has taught us that "who-soever wills to come after 'Him' must deny himself."

It is by this that a strong soul exercises itself in small things from high motive—and from this grows a vigorous and persevering Will. The habit, early acquired, of the thought not "What do I *wish*?" but "What *ought* I to do?" is the habit which grows into a loyal Will.

(2) Besides this, is needed honesty. To be sincere with oneself requires an effort. Nothing is more easy than to deceive oneself. In religious matters there is a strong temptation to many, to take the sweets and comforts of religion without its exacting requirements.

Balaam is one of the most conspicuous examples

of "self-deceiving obedience." He is the "type of the character which not only hides the truth from itself, but sees it in vain." It is possible, like him, to admire yet not believe; to look "at the order and beauty of the sacred camp," and yet to plot so as to "tempt and corrupt," "feeling the full grandeur of the spectacle, but able to keep from his heart, though he could not from his intellect and his lips, the confession that it was divine." To have the Will a loyal Will, to banish from it all traitors, the Christian must be prepared to *see himself* ruthlessly as he is, to make short work of all pretences, to fear and hate all self-deceptions, to be thorough in religious practice and religious thoughts and ways, so far as God has led him, and to hate, with a firm and unvarying, or anyhow, a constantly renewed, hatred, "every form of insincere homage to truth and religion."

(3) And, then, there is a need of *promptitude*. We must get into the way of not dallying with what is wrong. When the soul sees clearly it should act promptly. We have to beware of ourselves, of our weak and corrupt natures, of the force of temptation, of our tenderness towards ourselves. Quickness, *promptitude* in action, when once we see the truth, is a power of keeping a loyal Will. In the gentlest and sweetest of Christian characters nothing by God's grace is more to be cultivated, nothing is so necessary for strength and truth, as a loyal Will.

Meditation.

WHAT waverings of my Will there have been!
How, O soul! hast thou deceived thyself! How hast

thou shrunk from self-renunciation ! Awake to this in small things, following Christ ! How hast thou waited and delayed, and dallied with temptation, instead of acting promptly ! Oh ! follow Christ now. Brace thy Will, by grace, to suffer and to act.

*Sovereign faculty of Willing,
Rule, nor yield to rebels' word ;
Faithfully all upstarts killing,
Be thou loyal to the Lord.*

Prayer.

O GOD of Strength : give grace to me, to us all, to keep our Wills ever loyal to Thine : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Christian Character.—The Kind Heart.

TEXT.—“ *Be kind one to another.* ”—EPHES. iv. 32.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

IN our fallen nature there are found still remnants of a better Past. We are of one *kin*. All the families of man have a close relation in that common human nature which is shared by us all. To recognise this is a natural virtue ; it is to be *kind*.

The powers of Evil, however, are always as mighty for dividing men from one another as the grace of God is powerful to unite them. We find, accordingly, the ready hostility in races of men who have not been touched by Christian teaching. They readily prepare for battle. Division is a result of sin ; Union, of the nature re-made by Christ. Kindness, however, is found even in fallen natures. There still lingers a sense of kindred and of all that follows from it.

This is raised by grace to a supernatural strength. "The kindness of God" is spoken of in Scripture, as though our Father in Heaven deigned to recognise His kindred to us His fallen children. We, too, may learn this lesson from Him, to act towards others with a sense of kin.

The Christian character, because it is strong, because it is united with God in Christ, because it is awake to the sad lot of fallen man, has in it *kindness*.

(1) There is a power in kind thoughts. In what is called a "critical" age, there is a danger, publicly and privately, of ready ill-nature. Kind thoughts are cultivated by a Christian. These come from the *habit*, in a Christian character, of laying stress upon

one's own faults rather than on those of others. They come from our Lord's teaching as to the "mote" and the "beam." How they tone the warnings, for instance, of the pulpit! How, without being weak towards what is evil, they lead us to make allowances!

(2) Then the Christian character is habituated to kind words. Much of the happiness of life depends upon a kind word or look, which is balm and comfort to a wounded soul.

(3) Then there are kind deeds. Christ has done much for this. He *suffered for us*. He taught that what was done, however trifling it might be—"a cup of cold water only"—to the weak and weary for the sake of Him who is Human Nature by representation—had its reward; the reward of joy in helping others; of being nearer the Saviour's heart.

For the Christian character demands that we should see in all men, the worst, the most miserable, a possible Christ. Kindness—like the chisel of the sculptor freeing the Angel from the marble—draws this out. A ready disposition to kindness, and to that natural courtesy which is its expression, is a trait of Christian character. So to the mourning women and the crucified malefactor it was in the Saviour's passion.

Meditation.

How much mayst thou do, O my soul, by kindness, when thou canst do little else! Forget thyself, like thy Master, and think, speak, act for others.

*Where the gift to do some great deed,
Where the power shall I find ?
Still Christ's work is done most nobly
By the gentle, by the kind.*

Prayer.

O FATHER, who hast shown such unnumbered kindnesses to me, give me grace to feel for my brethren in the world, and, like my Lord, to be kind : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday after Passion Sunday.

Morning.

The Christian Character.—Energy, Charity.
Self-control.

TEXT.—“*God hath not given us the spirit of [craven] fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*”—2 TIM. i. 7.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

WE are constantly warned in Holy Scripture against indulgence in craven fear. Cowardice, “meanness of heart,” that coward and craven shrinking from responsibility and effort, which is portrayed in the unprofitable servant who could find nothing to do with his one talent—these are no features of Christian character. In the terrible statement as to the outcasts from God’s Kingdom it is striking that “the

fearful" are placed before the "unbelieving" in the list of the condemned.

(1) The Christian is to be marked, through grace, by spiritual energy. Sloth is one of the capital sins, because from it so many others arise. We are, indeed, so constituted that to have ourselves rightly ruled and our faculties freed from being instruments of sin, these faculties must be kept in activity. The inert mind never can assimilate knowledge. The relaxed Will is easily led captive by the lower nature or the forces of "the world." The dreamy heart can never go out in offices of kindness. A Christian, as more and more Christ's character is formed in him, will be alive and active in the work of Duty and the Service of God. Dreaminess is not Devotion, just as fussiness is not activity; but if the God of endless rest and endless work is in us, we learn in a calm but active spirit to follow Him who "went about doing good."

(2) And combined with this effort and energy must be the loving spirit, the divine charity. We are not machines to get work done, but *living* souls, and all work worthy of the Christian character must pass through a Christian heart. In the dark hours of life, which come to us all, energy may flag, but lovingness of heart will still live on. In human life, when a heart is pure, and the purpose set to do right, bright thoughts and even pure fun may well up from the charity of the soul to relieve life and help others. A general *tone* of lovingness may, by grace, *pervade* a life, and make it, like a sweet summer evening by the sea, calming and helpful to all.

(3) Effort, however, and activity may become fussiness. "Love may degenerate into self-pleasing dreaminess." Both need the correction of manly severity, at least with ourselves; of the spirit of sober self-command — what our version calls "a sound mind." So it has been truly said, we have each of us some points of habit or character which especially need to be curbed and disciplined. Sometimes the "seeds of evil," ungoverned, wayward thoughts, or wild and wrong imaginations, have to be held in restraint. Sometimes impetuosities or impulses, not wrong, but which may *become* wrong, have to be checked. So it is that God's grace is needed for that strong self-discipline, steady, great, real, which *releases* the soul so that it rises to a higher atmosphere, and forms a part of the character of a Christian.

Meditation.

SLOTH, dislike to taking trouble, dreary and damping gloominess, unrestrained thought and word — how often have these been mine! Come near Christ, O my soul! be near God; ask for grace to have energy, love, and self-discipline.

*Rise with vigour, lie not dreaming,
Let thy course in love be run;
Work, make not thy life mere seeming,
Self be ruled, and duty done.*

Prayer.

O GOD, Giver of all Grace, help me, help us all, so to follow Christ that, with energy, love, and true

self-discipline, we may please Thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Christian Character.—Moral Indignation.

TEXT.—“*Be ye angry and sin not.*”—EPHES. iv. 26.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

EASY good-nature may be put for Charity. In fact, it may be a form of sloth and self-pleasing. We may be so lethargic, so wanting in moral fibre, that we cannot be angry with iniquity.

Anger is not always a sin. Anger is, in fact, at times a virtue. Our Lord was angry at the hard-heartedness of some. But anger has to be guarded against, because, even when virtuous it readily passes into Sin. We are fallen creatures, and pure indignation against wrong is apt to take force and colour from human passion and to become sinful. Moses is said to have been the meekest of men. He is spoken of as often angry. Our Lord is specially

described as "meek and lowly of heart," and He, too, was angry. And we read with awestruck minds of "the wrath of the Lamb."

(1) By God's grace we may be wisely and seriously angry with ourselves. When we have made good resolves and then failed, anger rises, if we are true to ourselves ; but it must then be anger because of our love to God, and not a remorseful anger because our pride or self-respect is piqued.

(2) Anger against iniquity in others is a duty, but again a duty to be carefully guarded by prayer. Want of principle, want of "backbone" may make us gloss over sin and evil. On the other hand, we have to fear much the Pharisaic temper, we have to watch and pray against self-righteous pride, we have to remember St. Paul's injunction as to "restoring" a sinner who had lapsed "in the spirit of meekness," remembering that we may be, in God's sight, worse, and that if we have not fallen, it is only by the grace of God.

(3) Nevertheless, we must not be "partakers in other men's sins." We must be angry at wrong with a righteous anger, for if not, we sin. "Be ye angry" at wrong and evil, and so "sin not." Still righteous anger is not malice, passion, or lasting wrath. To keep up anger and malice in the heart is distinctly wrong. To have righteous wrath at cruelty or injustice against others, or wrong done to others, would appear to be a necessary and real temper in Christian character.

In this question, so difficult, more than ever do we need faithful prayer.

For, after all, the power of moral indignation bears a ray of likeness to God. "The wrath of God" is our expression of His holiness in relation to sin. If the soul draws near God, and in proportion as it draws near to Him, it is certain that it will feel towards itself when it has sinned, towards high-handed and persistent iniquity in others, a true moral indignation. Not to do so, in face of malignant and persistent and cruel iniquity, is to be unchristlike. The bad man of the Psalmist is the man who "hateth not anything that is evil."

Meditation.

WEAK, easy-going towards sin, O my soul, seek repentance, deeper, truer, and *hate* evil in thyself; then "in meekness and fear" wilt thou *hate* evil and love the sinner.

*Be Christlike, look in trustful love
To Him who died all souls to win;
Be angry thus, by power above,
At wrong without and wrong within.*

Prayer.

GIVE me, O Lord, the spirit of meekness and fear, the spirit of love to Thee, and grant me grace to hate iniquity, and to have humble, searching anger against sin : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday after Passion Sunday.

Morning.

The Christian Character.—Tenderness.

TEXT.—“*And be ye . . . tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.*”

—EPHES. iv. 32.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

A STRONG man, in the best sense of the word, is also tender. Tenderness may become weakness. Truth may become hardness or severity. So, it has been truly said and felt, the balance of the two is the noblest thing.

In Christ, tenderness of heart was conspicuous. Indeed, in Holy Scripture God reveals—if we may say so with reverence—this side of His character throughout. He cannot but punish unrepented sin,

for, indeed, that is only another way of saying that He is the good and holy God ; but He intends us to think of Him as a tender Father. He "will have mercy upon Jacob." "He has mercy upon the afflicted." "He doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men." "His mercies are new every morning." "Like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him." "He will have mercy and not sacrifice," *i.e.*, "He will have sacrifice, but not without mercy."

The continued, trustful, joyful voice of the Psalmist is rising in praise of His tenderness. The Prophets, too, while they have their message of severity and judgment, have also their message of mercy : "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the Lord," is a cry for all the Church and all time.

Fuller and more complete is the revelation by the New Testament. Here we have the amazing love and tenderness of God revealed in Jesus Christ. He came, indeed, to show us our Father. He is the image of that Father's being. Think of the constant kindness of Christ. We are apt to pride ourselves on gifts of intellect or taste or position to which He seemed to attach no value at all. We are apt to be more angry at stupidity (or what, in our pride and narrowness, we think such) than at Sin. He *bore with* men in all their darkness and limitations. He showed constant considerateness, constant kindness. He "went about doing good." To be miserable, or weak, or stricken in mind or body, was at once to rouse His tender compassion. So to the end. He tried to enlighten and convince Pilate. He was

patient under brutal insults. He comforted the saddened women. He prayed for His enemies on the Cross. From the Cross He remembered, with tender considerateness, His mother and His friend.

We, as Christians, have to pray for this grace. We are inclined to judge harshly, to condemn sweepingly, to be sharp-tempered and severe if annoyed. Only by divine grace, given in answer to prayer, and by thoughtfully realising the trials of others, can we acquire that tenderness and compassionateness which is an element in Christian character.

Meditation.

BLACK with shame, O weak, sinful, foolish being, to think how hard, unkind, inconsiderate, thou hast been ! Turn to Christ. Pray and strive, O my soul ! watchfully and carefully, to learn some of His tenderness and compassion to others. Thou needest it for thyself.

*Labouring, sorrowing, heavy laden,
Driven from ourselves to flee ;
Make us pitiful for others,
Love of God, we turn to Thee.*

Prayer.

O LOVING Father, give us grace to trust Thee. Grant us forgiveness for our harshness and want of pity. Make us gentle and tender like Thy dear Son : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

The Christian Character.—Strength.

TEXT.—“*Fear not : be strong, yea, be strong.*”—DAN. x. 19.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

STRENGTH is a feature in Christian character. It is a grace, and must be sought in persevering prayer. It is also a duty.

The Bible is full of exhortations to strength. One of the sacraments of the Church has as its object to make us strong.

The Prophet, when he saw the vision, was overwhelmed by the sense of the divine presence and of his own weakness. The supernatural Person who spoke to him “in the likeness of a man,” urged him—when he trembled before the thought of responsibility and the claim of God—to put away fear and be *strong*.

There are many things which tend to weaken.

(1) When we waken up to things, we are startled to find ourselves in a very awful world. When the

natural brightness of youth is over, we are arrested by the seriousness of Life. The Church seems, on the surface, to be always defeated. We are apt to lose sight of the working of hidden, unseen powers. The state of the world is distressing. Even recognising the great gifts we have in natural things, our civilisation covers over, as we know, very awful evils.

(2) We begin to learn our own weakness.

We are victims of great sorrows. Clouds look black before us, we see no light. Our "sins have taken such hold upon us," at times, "that we cannot look up." We have vague apprehensions of what *may* come.

Now, Holy Scripture warns us that, whatever truth there is in all this, to *dwell* on enfeebling thoughts and be guided by them is wrong.

(1) Things have *always* been full of disturbance and sorrow both in the Church and in the World. God's arm is "not shortened." He has guided and He will. He has saved and He will. "Out of darkness He bringeth light."

(2) There is *much* advance in goodness, kindness, self-sacrifice, even in a society so full of sin. "The leaven" of Christ's life has been "working." Philanthropy, kindness, vigour, self-denial, are found even among those who scarcely, with full consciousness or submission, hold the Faith.

(3) God's promises never fail. He will never leave those who seek Him. His methods and purposes for the government of His own Church, and for the government of His own world, are beyond our puny

gaze. *We* must do our duty and trust. No great thing is done on the basis of doubt and complaining and faultfinding and fretting. We must look on.

So, the gathering up of our power of will to keep the mind calm, resolute, trustful, whatever be the sorrow and trial, is *a duty*. That is, strength is a mark of Christian character.

Meditation.

Too often have I wasted force in fretting and complaining. I have *allowed* my hands to hang down. Sorrows must be felt. Difficulties and perplexities *must* come. But, O my soul, thou must stand firm "in the Lord and in the power of His might."

*Strong! be thou strong! know no surrender,
Though clouds bring sorrow, storms bring fear :
God's arm is strong, His heart is tender,
Strong, be thou strong! Think! He is near.*

Prayer.

O LORD of light and might and love, support us, Thy weak children, in all our trials. Give us grace to follow the example of Thy dear Son. Give us grace ever to be strong : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday after Passion Sunday.

Morning.

The Christian Character.—Manliness.

TEXT.—“*And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.*”—NICENE CREED.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

WHATEVER truly belongs to sinless Human Nature is now taken “into God.” The Eternal Son represents Humanity. He is an ideal for woman as well as man. He shows us the tenderness of woman, which, in right degree, should be in the heart of man. He shows us the strength of man, which, in right degree, should be in woman.

In the Christian character, there will be in men true *Manliness*, and what corresponds to it, with added tenderness, will be in woman.

In "the virtues of *Manliness*," it has been well said, are comprehended "those that belong to a serious estimate of the uses, the capacities, the calls of human life ; the duty of hard work ; the value and jealousy for true liberty ; independence of soul, deep sense of responsibility, and strength not to shrink from it ; steadiness, endurance, perseverance ; the power of sustaining cheerfully disappointment and defeat ; the temper not to make much of trifles, whether vexations or pleasures, . . . that great self-commanding power to which we give the name of moral courage ; which makes a man, who knows and measures all that his decision involves, not afraid to be alone against numbers ; nor afraid, when he knows that he is right, of the consciousness of the disapprobation of his fellows, of the face, the voice, the frown, the laugh, of those against him."

This was found in Christ, and He appeals to us from His conduct in His Passion, and from His throne of glory, to recognise and follow His true Manliness. Human Nature was *fulfilled* and brought to highest perfection by the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. Our Lord and Saviour and Judge is Man ; we are to follow Him.

We may get into the way of thinking that the Christian Religion encourages weakness of character. Nothing can be farther from the truth. It *does* insist upon the passive as well as the active virtues, but these often require less strength and determination than those. To *endure* often tries our manhood more than to *do*.

Manliness is never roughness or brutality. It im-

plies gentleness and self-restraint, as well as the highest courage.

We Christians, then, have to learn courage, independence, yet humility, generosity, vigour, and a quiet and pervading self-control. We have, and shall have, in this life, often to face serious dangers and overwhelming trials. We must keep near God, the fountain of strength. One thing, with a strong hand, we must put down—craven fear. God's grace can do for the weakest what is needed. "Be not afraid, only believe." "Quit you like men, be strong."

Meditation.

THE being, the wild impulses, the self-seekings, O my soul! which have been thine, have often led thee to weakness. Look up at Christ—the Man. Repent for the times of self-deception, self-pleasing, disregard of others, cowardice as to duty in the past. Pray for the grace of the Manly Mind of Christ. To stand firm in faith, in duty, in trial with which thou hast to deal.

*Man of Men, how great Thy glory,
Strong and perfect now, as then :
Write deep in my heart Thy story,
Make me like Thee, Man of Men !*

Prayer.

O GOD, who hast sent Thy Son to take our nature upon Him, to save us, to show us how to live and how to die : Give us grace in all things to follow His manliness : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Christian Character.—Faithfulness.

TEXT.—“*Jesus Christ—the faithful Witness.*”—REV. i. 5.

Collect.

WE beseech Thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon Thy people ; that by Thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE marks and signs and features of the Christian character may be summed up in one word—faithfulness. In this we comprise high virtues—immovable tenacity, vigour to withstand temptations to wavering or treachery, loyalty, and all the generous impulses and self-sacrificing efforts implied in that.

(1) Faithfulness is beautiful and admirable in the human relations of this world. It is the very heart of love. In the Mystery of Marriage the highest duty is to preserve it unshaken, untarnished. In the relation of parents to children it gives the glow and glory to affection. Father and mother and child may be parted by oceans and continents, by altered circumstances, wounding, heart-breaking trials, but a *faithful* love is a tie that knows no snapping. It

makes all that is in such relations naturally beautiful, also solemn and strong, with a touch of eternity.

(2) It is the same way in the case of friendship. In life we may have many, and kind and pleasant acquaintances—we can have only a few true friends. Friendship is tried by many changes and chances, by up and downs, by the insidious forces of altered circumstances. If it stands the test, it is by the powerful bond of *faithfulness*.

Now, so it is in Religion, in Christianity. The grace of God strengthens all these natural virtues, illuminates, exalts them.

(1) In Religion, again, we must be faithful to the voice of God. When God has taught us by conscience, by experience, by His Church, we must be faithful. “It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.” We must be faithful in the use of the gifts and talents He entrusts to us, not for our own glory, but for His.

(2) We must be faithful to Christ. He has been faithful to us—“the faithful and true Witness.” Here comes in the determination to deal with our sins, for which He died—with true repentance ; to obey His commands, especially—when we can—to communicate in His Body and Blood, and to join in offering “the Sacrifice of our ransom” ; to persevere in prayer, which He has taught and commanded. Again, it implies steady and persevering effort to follow His example, and to *use* His grace. Grace He gives to all who look up to Him : that grace we must use. And, in a diligent and holy life, we are constantly to practise the virtues He taught ; to bring

lower standards to a comparison with His standard ; to be dissatisfied unless we are applying the teachings of His life to the very different circumstances of ours.

(3) In a word, we must be faithful to *principles*. Mankind may be divided into those who live by, and cling to, *principles*, and those who permit their lives to move at random. Principles are like the strong mountains ; by looking to them we can guide our journey. Principles followed make a life strong, consistent, fruitful, amidst whatever trials and sorrows. We Christians must be faithful to *principles*.

Faithfulness is indeed the crown of the Christian character.

Meditation.

Often, too often, O my soul, hast thou lost sight of God ! Often, too often, forgotten and not followed the teachings and commands of Christ ! Often, too often, swerved from *principles*. Return, be strong. seek, and use, the grace of faithfulness.

*Master, give us grace, whenever
Tempted, faithful still to be :
And, with love and firm endeavour,
Through Life, Death, to follow Thee.*

Prayer.

O God, whose faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds, give me, give us all, grace ever to be faithful, in all things, to Thee : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Palm Sunday.

Morning.

Lessons of Holy Week.—Word and Fact.

TEXT.—“*Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*”

—MARK xi. 9.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility: Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE Holy Week gathers into itself much that is typical and characteristic in the life and teachings of our Lord. The end is, indeed, often the summing-up and expression, in short, of all that has gone before. So it is in ordinary men. On the whole, men die as they have lived, and not infrequently their deaths so crown and emphasise their lives as to awaken in

others, in the strongest degree, the thoughts and feelings which their work or teaching had, to some extent, roused in their lifetime.

So it was, in the highest degree, with Him who was Man of Men. The Gospel writers, partly, perhaps, for this reason, have been divinely guided to dwell on the Lord's closing days at a length quite out of proportion with the rest of His actions.

The headquarters, so to speak, of Christ this memorable week were with His dear friends at Bethany. Here He was with those who loved Him, and it was in consequence of the striking miracle of His raising Lazarus here from the dead that, strangely enough, the concentrated malice of His enemies and of the evil powers inspiring them was roused to the highest pitch. When the Lord had sent His disciples on the strange errand to fetch the ass with the colt, He rode, on the morning of Palm Sunday, into Jerusalem. Here was an evident fulfilment of prophecy, and the Jews, who were aware of the prophetic statements as to the coming thus of their Messiah, knew it. Owing to our Lord's work in Galilee (as now there were many northern Jews come to the Feast), and the fame of the great miracle of the raising of Lazarus, there were many who were ready to attend to Him, at least, for the moment. There seem to have been two processions—one made up of more immediate disciples, one coming out from Jerusalem to meet Him. The enthusiasm grew and grew. Palm branches were torn down, and garments taken off to throw on His path. When He reached Jerusalem "the whole city was moved." Everywhere the

cry was, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." It has been truly said that curiosity and fear, and wild popular enthusiasm, as well as—in comparatively few cases—true devotion, met and mingled in this sudden movement.

(1) Christ is the Truth. Now, Truth—especially the highest Truth—Truth relating to the greatest things and the unseen world, always *moves* men. It is curious and interesting; or it is exacting, and demands sacrifices which fallen Human Nature does not like; or it is enkindling to feeling and rouses passing emotion; *or* it subdues and enchains. Men find it difficult to be finally *indifferent* to Truth—to divine Truth. On the whole, they hate if they do not love, so, at least at times, they are *moved*.

(2) Truth and God's Presence have a simple Majesty. They touch, and win the homage of the true heart—although hidden and simple. In sincere Prayer, the awfulness, sweetness, nearness of God, touch and move the earnest soul, and trust, humility, awe, are the consequences. In the Blessed Sacrament the Church sings these very words of awe-struck welcome, while the Divine Presence is felt, though veiled.

(3) There is a danger in any Religion which is not deepened and calmed into *principles* of Duty. A Religion of fear, curiosity, enthusiasm, is Word not Fact, and cannot be *the* power of a Life.

Meditation.

Too often thoughtless and on the outside, have I dealt with Truth, feeling, emotion, fear! See, O my

soul ! the loving Christ, so awful because so humble and hidden ; and seek grace to deepen thy devotion and make thy Religion a fact !

*Blessed, blessed, He that cometh,
Humble, hidden, awful Lord :
Bid Him welcome, let Him rule thee,
Serve in fact and not in word.*

Prayer.

GIVE me grace, O Lord, ever to welcome, in deed and in truth, Thy divine Presence, and to be, in all things, in deep reality, Thy faithful servant : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

Lessons of Holy Week.—The Days of Visitation and the Fruitfulness of Sacrifice.

TEXT.—“ *Thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.*”

—ST. LUKE xix. 44.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility : Mercifully grant that we may both follow the ex-

ample of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE entry into Jerusalem ; the Lord's looking "round about upon all things" in the Temple ; the interview with some Greeks who desired to see Him, and who were introduced to Him by St. Philip ; the return to Bethany in the quiet evening, make up the chief events of that day.

But there had been deep sorrows and deep thoughts in the sacred mind of Jesus. He had wept bitter tears over Jerusalem ; He had spoken solemn words as to His Passion ; the recognition of His faithfulness as God's beloved Son, by the voice of God the Father, as before in His Baptism and Transfiguration—these had marked the day.

(1) Our Lord reminds us of the value and seriousness of opportunities. We may have great opportunities and only make them an "occasion of falling." It is the inner temper, the temper of a quiet faith, which makes all the difference. "Miracles," it has been well said, "are meant to assist those who are already seeking God." Great opportunities of religious service, of suffering, of trial, are helps to those who really look to the Unseen. Days come in all lives when God, it would appear, is very close to us, and makes special efforts for the soul. The death of a friend, some severe trial, some painful illness, some bitter parting, some unexpected call to higher and harder duty, if the eye is looking up in faith to

God, these will be times of revelation. Nothing can be more sad than to miss the meaning of such times. The doom of Jerusalem was certain, because she "knew not the time of her visitation."

(2) Our Lord reminds us of the fruitfulness of Sacrifice. His mighty work for all mankind was accomplished through entire surrender of Himself. No great work is ever done without sacrifice. The law of sacrifice is true in all departments of human experience. The great discoverers, the great writers, the great philanthropists, the great statesmen, in so far as they *are* great, are so because they have served others ; and to do this means sacrifice of self. "The corn of wheat" dying in the ground and bringing forth "much fruit" is a law of true life. The soldier may scarcely be heard of, but his willing, heroic sacrifice of life has been the seed out of which has grown the freedom and happiness of a people.

Whatever may be the inner meaning of so great a mystery, the willing acceptance of Death by the Lord of Life has been the saving of the world. We can look up with confidence to God ; we can prevail in Prayer ; we can find in Sacraments the force of life, *because He died*. In ourselves, slowly but surely, by His grace, we may have the highest of all joys and the greatest of all powers—the joy and power of Sacrifice. In so far as we die to self, we live with prevailing energy to God and to our fellows.

Meditation.

How much there has been in my life of self-seeking rather than self-sacrifice ! How correct it, O my

soul? Look faithfully, lovingly, to Christ. He died for me. Surely, by grace, I can die to self for Him, and for the souls He died to save.

*Life in Death and Death in Living,
Sacrifice can all control ;
All we have and are, by giving,
Means the true power of the soul.*

Prayer.

O LORD and Heavenly Father, who hast taught us by Thy dear Son the power of sacrifice : Give us grace to die more and more to self and live to Thee : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday after Palm Sunday.

Morning.

Lessons of Holy Week.—Dangers of Insincerity
and Worldliness.

TEXT.—“*Not in tongue but in truth.*”—I JOHN iii. 18.

“*Love not the world.*”—I JOHN ii. 15.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility : Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

OUR Lord had spent the night at Bethany as usual, and in the morning He was hungry when He went towards Jerusalem. It has been thought that He had spent the night in fasting and prayer. Then came the startling miracle of cursing the barren fig-tree.

According to the usual life of the fig-tree, the fruit would come before the leaves ; and seeing abundance of leaves our Lord went to seek the fruit. The other fig-trees were bare of leaves, but this one seemed to speak of fruit. It has been truly said that this miracle was an acted parable. When our Lord cursed the fig-tree it was not because it was barren, but because it put on the appearance of being fruitful.

No doubt the intention was to teach us the danger of mere false profession, the danger of insincerity. It has been noticed that our Lord's miracles, as a rule, were miracles of kindness ; this was apparently one of extreme severity. Doubtless, He was warning the Disciples of the dangerous position of the Jewish people. Their teachers made great professions, but in fact, in His eyes, they were mere actors.

The miracle, however, went much further than this. It is a lesson to us all of the danger of insincerity, and the beauty and necessity of truth. We are great self-deceivers ; it is one of the strange possibilities of fallen human nature that we are able severely to censure the sins of others, while our own condition may be one a great deal more of easy respectability than of deep religious principle. Religion must not be a mere matter of feeling, a mere matter of respectable appearance. God looks at the inner life and examines our motives. We are bound to watch closely and to fight strenuously against a mere external show of religion. We are bound, above all things, to endeavour to be true.

It is of the greatest importance to see to it, in the solemn moments of self-examination and prayer, that

there is in us "the honest and good heart." Hollow-ness and pretence turn spiritual life into a ruin. It is terrible if we should waken up to find out that our religion was one of easy phrases instead of one of serious facts. What, then, is the teaching of such an incident? For practical purposes it is watchfulness and prayer. It is not a good thing to be always scrutinizing our own conduct. There is a time for everything. There are times when that conduct should be closely scrutinized. What we want is to form in us, by true repentance, by honest intentions honestly offered, by the habit of quiet reference in all things to our Father in Heaven—a simple and straightforward character. Habits grow from acts; acts from thoughts and intentions. We need not fear to be false if we constantly seek God's grace to enable us to be honest and true. God Himself is reality, and He loves it. However crooked our nature may be in danger of becoming through the wound of the Fall, or through past sin, our Father, who loves us, delights in correcting all this by His grace if we earnestly ask Him. If our Lord rebuked insincerity by cursing the barren fig-tree, He rebuked that same day, by the clearing of the Temple of buyers and sellers, the habit of worldliness. It was a day of great deeds.

Meditation.

GREAT things God has done for thee, O my soul ! Look back. How has He guided thee for many years ! And how often hast thou repaid Him with insincerities and worldliness,

*True, be true ! With soul unworldly,
 Seek the God of strength and truth ;
 Cling to Him and look straightforward,
 Deep within thy heart guard truth.*

Prayer.

O LORD, who hast sent Thy dear Son to warn, to teach, and to die for us : Give me, give us all, grace to follow Him in heavenly-mindedness and truth : for the sake of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

Lessons of Holy Week.—Reward of Energetic Faith.

TEXT.—“ *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* ”—ST. MATT. xi. 28.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility : Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE Monday in the Holy Week was a day of great deeds. The mighty power of the Son of Man was put forth for a last witness *by act* to His Nature and Mission, as a last opportunity for those who had eyes to see, to come to Him.

In the Temple the Lame and the Blind came to Him and He healed them.

Our Lord's miracles are always full of teaching. Of them it has been well said : "Some were to show His power ; others were to show His goodness ; others were a kind of type or sign of His office as the Redeemer and Saviour of souls. Others were, in like manner, a type of His office as the Judge and Punisher of the impenitent. Most of them were miracles of mercy in some shape or other . . . almost all had a spiritual meaning and significance, over and above the wonderful display of tenderness, or wisdom, or heavenly justice in the miracle itself. . . . When He healed the sick and opened the eyes of the blind, and made the dumb to speak and the lame to walk . . . what are all these precious miracles but tokens of the way in which He deals with the diseases of the soul : making the drunkard sober, and the liar true, and the proud humble ; driving out the devil of lust and uncleanness, of hatred and malice ; teaching the careless to be watchful and earnest, the idle waster of his time to dedicate it to God's service ; the lover of this world and of money to open his eyes and see the better things which God has to give?"

Now here the infirm came to Him.

(1) We may come ; but to come to Jesus is for the whole being to move to Him, stretch out to Him, and trust Him by the exercise of a strong and living faith. These had faith. Our Lord healed them, for they trusted Him, and their whole beings *went out* to meet His love by their trust.

(2) We must *exert ourselves* to come to Jesus. These *took trouble*. Spiritual and bodily sloth often keep us back from Christ. We come to Him by an uplifted heart, by earnest prayer, by loving, faithful, earnest communion in His Body and Blood ; by joining in offering the Great Sacrifice of our Ransom ; by listening for His voice and guiding our steps by His teaching. We must *take pains*. Why is it that people are often lazy about Religion, about Church, about Sacraments, about Prayer ? We have not realised two things : (1) Our need ; (2) Christ's love and power. Sin makes us *lame*. It is a weight which hinders us in "running the race that is set before us." Sin makes us *blind*. We are satisfied with ourselves when, all the time, much is wrong. If only we open our eyes to facts, if only we stretch out the hands of faith, Christ is able to heal us now as He healed them then. He can still for us do great deeds.

Meditation.

WALKING in darkness, O my soul ! you have not seen your sin. Slow and painful is the journey of truth and duty. You have been weighted and clogged by Sin. Have faith in God, Come to

Jesus. He will open your eyes and take the weight of Sin away.

*Wake, my soul, from slothful slumber,
Rouse thee, journey to thy Lord ;
Hast thou sins that none can number ?
He can heal thee by His Word.*

Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, who lovest us and hast given all power on earth and in Heaven to Thy dear Son : Give us grace to come to Him in faith and penitence, and grant that, by Him, we may be healed : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday after Palm Sunday.

Morning.

Lessons of the Holy Week.—The Wisdom that
is from above.

TEXT.—“*Be ye . . . wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*”

—ST. MATT. x. 16.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility: Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience and also be made partakers of His Resurrection: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

OUR Lord had, as usual, spent the Monday night at Bethany. This day, Tuesday, was spent again in Jerusalem. It was the last day of our Lord's Public Ministry. It was the last public opportunity for His own nation to hear and recognise the voice and power of their Messiah. This was a day of great sayings. Many things happened which gave occasion for our Lord to speak. Among them these:

(1) The Scribes and Elders laid a trap for Him, by questioning Him as to His authority. In His answer our Lord silenced them by placing them in what was an awkward dilemma. The Sadducees and Herodians had tried to entrap Him in the same sort of way, the first as to immortality, the second as to the relation of civil and religious authority, and these, too, he had silenced with consummate wisdom.

(2) He spoke a marvellous chain of parables to the people who thronged the Temple, and were "very attentive for to hear Him": "The Wicked Husbandmen," "The Rejected Corner Stone," "The Marriage of the King's Son," "The Ten Virgins," "The Talents," "The Widow's Mite"—this was an outcome and teaching of divine wisdom.

(1) We must remember that Christianity is not a matter of soft or unreal sentimentalism. It is a matter of high principle. "The world is very evil; the times are getting late." There is a common sense of faith. The great battle in which we are engaged requires thought and skill, and carefulness, for our enemy is exceedingly crafty. The perplexities of life are many. On every side dangers and difficulties surround us. Traps are set and ambushes prepared by the Powers of Evil to ensnare the servants of God, and we have to march with caution and with eyes open to the facts with which we have to deal. Where shall we find guidance? Follow our Lord. We are not to commit ourselves to the world. We must be gentle and harmless, but wise, and strong, and with common sense. Thorough common sense, that is wisdom applied to the ordinary concerns of

life, is a marked feature in the character of the Saints. We must ask, and we shall receive "the wisdom that cometh from above."

(2) That wisdom teaches us to live for eternity; to be faithful servants waiting for our Lord's coming; to *prepare*, to have on "the wedding garment"; to lean on, look to, seek Christ only as the Corner Stone; to have our lamps burning with the oil of God's grace; to give to God, in all things that we offer Him, with a simple, sincere, and thorough heart. The very last words which our Lord seems to have spoken in His Public Ministry in the Temple were the words in praise of the poor widow, who, unostentatiously, gave God all.

Meditation.

O FOOLISH soul! look up to the Light of the World. How often have I walked confidently by my own understanding, and miserably failed! Seek God's wisdom. He giveth it generously, "and upbraideth not." Life can never go wrong under the light of "the wisdom that cometh from above."

*"Forgive our wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth:
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in Thy wisdom make me wise."*

Prayer.

O GOD, who art the Fountain of Wisdom, give Thy wisdom to me, to us all, that, walking in the light of Thy truth, we may attain unto everlasting life: for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen,

Ebening.

Lessons of Holy Week.—The Seriousness of Life.

TEXT.—“*Therefore, be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.*”—ST. MATT. xxiv. 44.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility : Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience and also be made partakers of His Resurrection : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

On this evening closed our Lord's Public Ministry, and this day of great words.

The closing was specially solemn in this way : (1) Our Lord looked round upon the Temple as He left it, as men look round on a place they have known and loved before they leave it for long years, or for Eternity, to say farewell ; and when His Disciples called His attention to the magnitude and beauty of the buildings, He foretold solemnly the approaching destruction. (2) Seated on the slope of Olivet, with some of His followers—Peter, John, James, Andrew—He discoursed upon the last things.

Nothing is calculated to impress more strongly upon us the dignity and seriousness of Life.

(1) The events and actions of this life are represented by our Lord as running up, in their results and consequences, into another. There is a real continuity. "The Future," so it has been well said, "is viewed in immediate and exclusive relation to this life as a life of probation, a life given for obedience and duty, and inexorably connected with it. To this life succeeds Judgment, and Judgment is always spoken of as if it were something complete and final. . . . We cannot misunderstand about the gathering of all nations before the Throne, about the great division to the right hand and to the left. . . . Whatever may be the measures and differences of sin, we cannot misunderstand about retribution, absolute, as terrible as words can describe it, on sin which has not been forgiven."

(2) Again, the Judge of us all is the Son of Man. Our Lord is quite clear about this. So, too, His Apostles are quite clear, and strong and definite. "The New Testament," it has been said, "holds this before us with a persistent definiteness, which shows that it was meant to leave no room for misunderstanding, and meant, too, to make an impression on us. . . . Bound up with mankind in all things, in man's nature, in man's humiliation, in man's trials, in man's redemption, He it is who, having taken part with man in his hard and painful training for immortality . . . shall declare to men at last what has been the issue and fruit of these long years of time : from Him, our Brother and our Atonement, we

each one of us shall learn what we have done with our life, and what is the very truth about it."

No one can help feeling, if they believe Christ's words, what dignity, what awfulness, this gives to life. Judgment seems very awful, and so it is. Yet we may be thankful to be judged by Him who makes large allowances, who knows all. But the great things of life become small, and the small things great, when we think of life as a preparation for that last great scene.

Meditation.

DEEP in my heart let me think of the seriousness of life. I must not allow myself to view life, however humble be the circumstances of it and the work, otherwise than as a time of responsibility and duty, and such that each thing has its meaning in the light of Eternity, and must be done in the faith and peace of God.

*Let your life be strong and earnest,
True and diligent and brave :
All that is is passing swiftly
To that scene beyond the grave.*

Prayer.

DEEPEN, O Lord, in our hearts, the sense of Thy Presence. Help us to live in Thy faith and fear. Take from me, from us all, everything merely frivolous and worldly. Help us, by grace, to live in view of Thy Judgment and the life beyond : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ■

Wednesday after Palm Sunday.

Morning.

Lessons of Holy Week.—Danger of Encroaching Sin.

TEXT.—“*Keep Thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me.*”—PS. xix. 13.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility: Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THIS day rests in shadow. Our Lord, as usual, had spent the Tuesday night at Bethany. This day also He seems to have spent there, and a sacred veil is drawn over the hours of that day.

Evil, however, ~~was~~ is active. When the Chief Priests

and Scribes took counsel together, Judas seems to have sought them out, in order to put them in the way of seizing Christ without rousing popular opposition, for the people were still with Him. It was necessary that the thing should be done quietly, and *then* the people brought round—which is what occurred. Judas offered himself as their ready instrument for the work. *It was a deliberate Sin.*

Again, the sin was the sin of money-getting. Judas seems to have been so wicked and presumptuous that, while he had no idea or intention of things going so far as they actually did go at last, he thought that his Master should be checked, and that he might gratify his passion for money in the process. *It was a mean Sin.*

Covetousness is a deadly Sin. It kills love. In some other sins men mistake the true object for affection, and abuse the gift of love. This sin, like all that is mean, kills it. It makes the soul self-centred, and self-centred with low and sordid motives. *It was a destructive Sin.*

We grow better, all agree, *or* we grow worse. The final form of character will depend upon the master motives—the chief objects which the soul adopts as its special delights and governing desires.

Slowly, but surely, Sin creeps on, if it be not checked. A character may become demoralised and broken. A longing for, then a yielding to, some evil thing grows in intensity if not stayed by grace. Men *allow* the influence of some wrong tendency until it completely masters them. The drunkard, or the debauchee, or the miser, or the murderer, would have

shrunk with horror from the thought of being what they, at last, became, could they have seen it at first. Judas allowed his ruling passion to creep over him steadily ; and that, too, though warned and rebuked by the loving Presence of unearthly Goodness. To see and live with all that is best and noblest, and to fall, at the same time, deliberately and then steadily under the power of the besetting sin—this is very terrible !

We learn (1) to watch small beginnings of evil. We may make all possible allowances for others who are tempted much, and who sin grievously ; we must not make allowance for ourselves. God, in His mercy, will do that if we turn to Him. We must watch beginnings.

(2) We must make our religion real. “ We know that there is such a thing,” it has been wisely said, “ as religion occupying a large part in a man’s character which is absolutely neutralised and paralysed as to all good by gross moral passions.” Ours must be vigorous and operative. Our Lord teaches us, by the lost Apostle, of the creeping power of Sin, and the need, not of remorse, but of repentance.

Meditation.

REMEMBER, O my soul ! the insidious power of Sin. Too often hast thou *hesitated* in temptation. Turn at once. Look back on failures and sins in the past : how *gradually*, to the unguarded mind, one thing has followed upon another. Hold a strong hand upon thyself, by grace, when the tempter comes.

*Subtle, wily, is the tempter,
And a traitor lurks within ;
Watch, resist by God's good helping,
All the creeping powers of Sin.*

Prayer.

O GOD ! who hast promised Thy Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee, and whose grace is all-powerful, hear me and help me, and all whom I ought to pray for, that strength may be given and sin may never subdue and govern our souls : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening.

Lessons of Holy Week.—Retirement and Struggle.

TEXT.—“ *Thou wilt prepare their heart.*”—PS. x. 17.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility : Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THE Wednesday in the Holy Week was the day of our Lord's retirement. He had closed his Public Ministry. His active work for His people was done. Now He was to enter on the vast undertaking of the Passion.

We cannot doubt that this was the day of His seclusion to prepare for all that was to come : " Prepare to meet Thy God " is the injunction of the Prophet. Whenever a special meeting with God is foreseen, those who are in earnest will prepare their hearts.

(1) Preparations for great undertakings is a law of life. The boy is prepared for school ; the school-boy for university effort ; the soldier is drilled and taught before entering on his profession. The General rests and warns, encourages and prepares his soldiers before battle. The artist prepares himself by long study and diligent practice, to succeed in his art.

(2) Our Blessed Lord followed out the law of that Human Nature which He had taken as His own. The Hidden Life of Nazareth was a nearly thirty-year preparation for the work of His missionary toils. Short as was the time of the Public Ministry, it required that long preparation. At great crises of His earthly life it was the same. Before His great work actually began He had the forty days' fast and retirement ; the loneliness, the struggle, the temptation. Before His choice of Apostles there was the night of fasting and prayer and withdrawal with God. And as He

did Himself so He taught His disciples. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile," was His cry to them after and before great missionary effort. And the Transfiguration, the realising, in some slight degree, His greatness, was evidently a preparation to assist them in bearing the awful revelation of His Passion.

(3) So must it be with those who follow Him. Sometimes we *can* retire from the busy haunts of men, from the noise and excitement of the world and of life, from amusements which, however innocent, may absorb; and this we should do, if so it may be, before any great duty undertaken with and for God.

Sometimes this cannot be; but we can always steal a little special time; or we can retire into our own hearts, enter that secluded presence chamber, and be alone with God.

There is a means (1) for storing the forces. To think over things with God is to feel our need, and this sends us to prayer. Where there is earnest prayer, God hears and helps. New forces come together. Fresh vigour is in the soul. Strong resolves and high purposes, together with force to execute these, are found. We must store the forces. (2) Things are thus placed in their true relative position. We see the right proportion and true value of things; we *see* where to attack, where to resist, how to act, how to stand firm. Ever, before grave undertakings and in crises of life, we must seek some retirement with God.

Meditation.

Too outward hast thou been, O my soul ! too self-confident. The inner life is the storehouse of strength. To be near God, to consult God, to seek help from God—this is a duty. This, too, is a power. Be alone with God before undertaking any special and difficult task. Seek grace. Store the forces.

*Power comes from God's assistance,
Wills are strengthened, souls are braced :
Watch and see, in lonely converse,
Thus on thee God's will is traced.*

Prayer.

O LORD, Heavenly Father, give to us the spirit of retirement, prayer, preparation in lonely communion with Thee : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Maundy Thursday.

Morning.

Lessons of Holy Week.—True Greatness.—Human Sorrow.

TEXT.—“*I am among you as he that serveth.*”—ST. LUKE xxii. 27.

“*If Thou be willing remove this cup from me.*”

—ST. LUKE xxii. 42.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility : Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

ON the Thursday in the Holy Week our Lord was still in retirement until the evening. The Disciples had been sent to prepare for His last celebration of the Paschal supper, the fulfilling of the Law, the

winding-up of the Old Dispensation of God's gifts and teachings. It was in the supper-room that our Master was conscious of a strife among them for dignity and authority and precedence. It was there that He reminded them that they should strive to be as He was, if, indeed, they sought for greatness and glory. "I am among you as he that serveth."

(1) Greatness, it has been said, will seem to consist in very different things, according to different lines of life and practice in life. Bodily strength, or the possession of health, or "that combination of circumstances and of qualities which implies social or political power . . . at bottom, the great man, in all these estimates, is the man who is considered."

Our Lord brought into the world a new ideal.

"Real greatness consists," it has been truly said, "in nothing that strikes the eye or the imagination. . . . It consists externally in service—the very thing which a purely worldly conception of greatness is most anxious to avoid : the service, first of all, of God ; the service, for God's sake, of men ; the service always of truth—a service which is most splendid and most imposing when it is begun, completed, and ended in suffering. And it consists, internally, in love, which perpetually prompts service, and which is fed by faith—faith, that new sense of the soul, to which the unseen world is a constant and serious reality." To this our Lord calls us. We must cherish a noble ambition, lifting us above the little things of self : the ambition to serve God and to serve others.

(2) On that solemn evening our Lord teaches us another and a powerful and comforting lesson.

He was thrown into an agony of sorrow. Sorrow is a sacred thing, for Christ sorrowed. He, in His Humanity, felt the bitterness of it. He had the human sorrow of parting with friends ; He had the sorrow of foreseen death ; He had sorrow for sin—though not His own, indeed, yet, in a sense, made His own—pressing upon Him. What was it He taught us ? (1) Indeed, the dreadfulness of sin, which caused Him such sorrow ; but (2) the sacredness, dignity, uses of sorrow, in training and strengthening character ; and (3), above all, the spirit of filial dependence and entire submission to God's holy Will. Only so can sorrow be sanctified and borne. Only so, too, can we sorrow for sin as we ought. Only so can we grow in that grace which comes in this life to those who take God's Will as the rule of life.

Meditation.

SORROW is indeed a cruel fellowship. You have feared it and felt it, O my soul ! That is not wrong ; but have you not kept too far from God in it ? Bring it to Him : submit to His Will. Rise, too, to real greatness—the greatness of service. Serve God, serve others.

*Service is the only greatness,
Sorrow's is a cruel road ;
God can guide to do the service,
God can help to bear the load.*

Prayer.

O GOD! give me, give us all, grace to be faithful in service, and to submit with a willing mind to Thy Will : for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Evening.

Lessons of Holy Week.—Love unto the end.

TEXT.—“ *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* ”—ST. JOHN xiii. 35.

“ *If ye love me keep my commandments.* ”—ST. JOHN xiv. 15.

“ *Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.* ”

—ST. JOHN xiii. 1.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility : Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be partakers of His Resurrection : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

MAUNDY THURSDAY is the day of the *Mandatum*, the Day of the Great Command. Our Blessed Lord gave this in two forms—the inward power and principle, the force and expression of that power.

(1) The force and form of expression He places

in the Blessed Sacrament : " Do this," " Offer this," " Show the death of Christ to the Father in the Sacrifice of the Altar," " Do this," " Take this," " Receive the Body and Blood for the strengthening and refreshing of the soul," " Make His commemoration and memorial," " Remember Him, receive Him, feed on Him." Here is force. Here is power. Here is obedience to be given as a proof of real devotion.

And (2), there is the inward power and principle of the Christian life—Love.

We need not think of *unreal* love for others. We need not pretend that we are to love everyone in exactly the same degree, or the same way. Much less need we weaken moral perception by making easy good nature, or sickly sentiment stand for Charity, and so lose the power of hating iniquity, and punishing what is wrong.

God has given us special objects of affection. Christ loved St. Mary and St. John above all. God has given these to lead us to a high and pervading principle, and up to His love.

(1) We have strong and assuring comfort, Christ loves us to the end. We have tried Him in many ways. His love is proof against trial. "*He*, for His part," will do all that love can do for us. In the deepest trials and sorrows of life, God's love is there. He will *do all He can* for us. *Force* us to goodness and happiness He cannot. He will reprove, rebuke, exhort, comfort, call. He is "very busy," as a holy man has said, "about death-beds." He loves to the end.

(2) Real love is *the* power on earth. For real love is an eternal thing. It has its make-believes and counterfeits. It has also its degrees and various ways and expressions ; but *it*—whenever it is *real*—is powerful because eternal, because of God. By it, *all* can be done. It avows, but tempers, justice. It strengthens resolve. It teaches to hate and punish iniquity. It bears, forbears, watches and sacrifices itself. It tends and cares for its dear objects and greatest treasures ; and then, with tear-filled eyes, it reaches, with powerful prayer, beyond the grave. Learn to love truly—kill the worldliness, the mere sentiment, the moral obliquities which would kill it. “Love is of God.” “Love to the end,” to conquer Sin.

Meditation.

How often, O my soul ! has selfishness hindered love ! Keep near the strong God of love, O my soul ! So wilt Thou conquer evil and do good.

*True love lasts when all is ended,
Ray of glory from above ;
Not left lonely, still befriended,
If we love, and truly love.*

Prayer.

O GOD of Love : Give us Thy best gift—love : for Christ's sake. Amen.

Good Friday.

Morning.

Lessons of Holy Week.—The Struggle of the Soul.

TEXT.—“*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*”

—ST. MATT. xxvi. 38.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, we beseech Thee graciously to behold this Thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the Cross : who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified : Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before Thee for all estates of men in Thy Holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee : through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reading.

THE Passion is an endless subject. It is like a wide sea, or rather, a boundless ocean. To embark

upon it is to have before one new revelations and fresh changes; bright patches of sunlight, dark clouds of gloom; fresh impressions, at every turn, bear upon the mind, flashes of mysterious truths; and depths of unimagined sorrow, forces of unending love—all are pressing upon the Christian. The Passion is an endless subject.

The Church deals in detail with the prominent facts, from which come the most serious teaching on Good Friday. In preparation for following that teaching with reverence and sorrow there is one great lesson of which we may think.

The Battle between Good and Evil is *the* fact of this sad, strange world. Which side we take is of unimagined importance, and how we persevere. The crisis of that battle was on the Cross. In the Three Hours' Agony the struggle raged. "Agony" means conflict; the dereliction, the forsakenness, was the final moment of conflict. "Humanity by representation," in the Person of Christ, met the fiercest assault of Evil, plunged into the darkest depths of Hell, and emerged—scarred, but victorious.

We learn that for all the followers of Christ there must be the struggle of the Soul.

We must have *struggle* of one sort or another in the spiritual life: (1) Perhaps with Doubt and Half-belief. The soul awakens to mysteries and perplexities, and asks of the Faith: "Can this be so?" (2) With growing Indifference. The easy tenour of custom, or the busy life of the world, blunts the edge of all high feeling. The voice is: "This will do well enough." (3) With Passion. The soul is whirled off

by its whirlwind, or blinded by its mists. The question is : " Why not enjoy myself ? " The story of sower and seed recurs. The ground, the heart, may be hard, or shallow, or choked with cares or money-getting, or pleasures. (4) The terrible struggle with Sorrow. This cuts deep. Beautiful and holy it may be, but temptation comes : " Where's the use of anything now ? "

For these struggles this should be thought :

(1) We may face them all *with Christ*. He went through struggles. *With Him*, so can we. Let us keep the truly religious mind. (2) In a spirit of *trust* : " He shall not be *afraid* of any evil tidings [however much they come], for his heart standeth fast and believeth in the Lord." " Be not afraid, only believe." (3) In loving prayer. We have a Father. Let it be still " *My God ! My God !* " So does struggle train the soul and end in victory.

Meditation.

POWERFUL upon thee, O my soul ! have been the World, the Flesh, the Devil. How God hath shielded thee ! Fear not the struggle ; it must come. Be like Christ ; trust in God. Pray, love, try again. In Christ, victory is certain.

*Fiercely rages on the conflict,
Changeful ever, no relief ;
Strong, be strong, and Christ thy Master
Brings thee courage, strength, belief.*

Prayer.

O LORD JESUS, who, for us, didst endure the conflict of Thy Passion : Give us grace to face all foes in Thee and with Thee ; and of Thy mercy, and by Thy grace, give us victory. Amen.

Evening.**Lessons of Holy Week.—The Pathos of the Grave.**

TEXT.—“ *He . . . laid it in a sepulchre.* ”—ST. LUKE xxiii. 53.

Collect.

O MOST merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that Thou hast made, nor wouldst the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live : Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy word ; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to Thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord : who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

GOOD FRIDAY Evening is full of tender and moving thoughts. In imaginative sympathy we feel *with* the Lord that the terrible struggle of His Humanity

is over, that at last there is cessation of the battle. We stand with those who watched Him and carried His body to the tomb, we follow with the simple funeral.

There is much that comes to us in quiet thought as we watch and wait until the Body is laid away. There comes to us the truth of the pathos of the grave.

(1) The grave is the place of Mystery. Even as we stand by it, it brings to us in wordless, winged thoughts and flashes the mystery of the world, Life and Death. Here they seem to meet us—two of the great forces of the world—the dark and the glorious, and the dark *seems* to be conqueror. All around is life with its joy, its vigour, its recurring promise—the breaking of the dawn, the reawakening of the birds in song, the freshening of the bough, the opening of the blossoms, the bleating of the lambs, the distant sounds of human movement—and here that life, so bright, so precious, sealed and still !

(2) It brings home the sense of ending, the sense of loss. What preparation ! What work ! What years of gradual unfolding, of accumulating knowledge, of storing up experience ! What promise of its use ! And all inadequate. So much power, so many gifts. So short, at the longest, the opportunity of using them ! We moan to think it over—

“Is this the end ? is this the end ?”

(3) It is the outward sign and symbol of that terrible thing—Parting.

There is a power given on earth to all who are

noble-hearted, true-hearted, deep-natured ; to the faithful, the unselfish, the single-minded, the strong—the power of Loving. This is, without question, God-like. Nothing so like God as faithful, unflagging, self-forgetting Love. And the Grave says, not “ This can be broken,” but “ The outward signs of this must go ”—

“ Death puts our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.”

At the grave we tremble and murmur, “ Is it all over ? ” This is the pathos of the grave.

We learn from it, “ Be strong ” ; even the grave has been conquered. It *is* a symbol of the real sorrow, the real strangeness and emptiness of life. It does mark an end, but only the end of one stage in a journey.

We learn from it—“ Make the venture of Faith.” Where would be the glory of that fine power, Faith, if it could not “ venture ” and trust God even beyond *this*. We learn from it—“ Prepare to die.” A holy, a pure, a noble life, can defy even the grave. We learn from it—“ Love on.” Love, real love, is *the* eternal thing ; the grave is an accident in immortality.

Meditation.

THINK, O my soul ! seriously, calmly, thoughtfully, of Life. Think so, too, of Death. Clasp hands with Christ. Rest, lean on God. The hour of trial, of sorrow, must come. Thou canst bear it and use it nobly by His power, and *with* Him.

*Sad this symbol of the ending
Of all sweetest things Life gave,
Yet Strength, Patience, Love may conquer
E'en the darkness of the grave.*

Prayer.

PREPARE us, O Father, in Thy love for the hour of Parting, of Sorrow, of Death ; give us a sure Hope and a strong Faith : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy Saturday.

Morning.

Lessons of Holy Week.—The Rest that remaineth.

TEXT.—“*Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest.*”

—HEB. iv. 11.

Collect.

GRANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of Thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him ; and that through the grave and gate of Death we may pass to our joyful resurrection : for His merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

HOLY SATURDAY is a day for quiet thought. It is for the soul—if we will, even amid outward cares—a “Sabbath,” a Day of Rest. Our hearts may be full of Christ’s rest.

The grave has this symbolism for the Christian. The Christian soul is unable to put from it—and rightly—this aspect of the grave. Here is a symbol

of quiet sleep—of “the rest that remaineth for the people of God.”

Another life will be, we know, a time of activity and service ; also we are reminded of rest.

There is something different in the state of the dead between Death and Resurrection from that state *after* we are all called from the grave.

(1) There is the rest from toil. Life is full of it. It is our training, our blessing, *and* our trial. *There* no more weariness or flagging powers. That sleep is the refreshment of the soul after toil. (2) There is the rest from temptation, from sin, from possible failure—the soul knows that all is well. (3) There is the rest of increasing goodness. The remnants of sin, the little toils of the soul, the scars of the past struggle are being cleansed away and made beautiful by the power of Christ. (4) There is the rest of quiet, happy anticipation. The fuller joy is coming ; the nearer revelation of all things sweet and beautiful is felt. (5) There is the rest of the perfection of trust, and the calm upbreathing of unlaboured prayer.

(1) *We* must here think of this, and so we are helped to prepare to die. Thinking of it, the mere feverish dream of life loses its injurious power. We are more calm, more quiet, and full of faith, more strong in looking forward. (2) So we learn to resign to God's strong hands the beloved Dead—yet not as though “they without us were made perfect.” *They* have their quiet upbreathings of yearning prayer. *We*, who are *with them* in church, realise our place in the Body of Christ, in the Family of

God, and speak of them to our Father. We pray for the Dead.

(3) We have a calmer, stronger, more truthful life. True Prayer, strong Sacraments, thought of Christ's power and presence, trustful looking forward to God's Will done in us in them—these bring us the calm vigour of strong souls. We may have "Labour and Sorrow"; we may feel as years go on—with thankful hearts for all the blessings Life has brought us—that still here is not the resting-place. "There is a rest that remaineth." By faith, repentance, faithfulness, *we* must "labour to enter into that rest."

Meditation.

O MY soul ! perturbed and troubled, sullen and perplexed, be calm in God. Trust in Christ, live in prayer. Trust whom Thou lovest to Him. Look to that rest in Him, which may be thine.

*Life's best happiness is chequered,
Sorrows come to the most blest ;
Wait in faith. Love on, be trustful,
Partings over—then is rest.*

Prayer.

GIVE me, O Father, give us all, grace to labour for Thy rest. Grant rest eternal to those we love, who are gone : through Christ. Amen.

Evening.

Lessons of Holy Week.—The Glimmer of the
Dawn.

TEXT.—“*At evening time it shall be light.*”—ZECH. xiv. 7.

Collect.

GRANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of Thy blessed Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him ; and that through the grave and gate of Death we may pass to our joyful resurrection : for His merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading.

THERE are in life, in nature, in the world, what may be called Master Examples of things. They bring to us suggestions of the essential points, the leading aspects, the chief characteristics of the things themselves.

To a devout man, Holy Saturday—the Eve of Easter Day—has all the tender suggestiveness of the sweetest powers of Evening. Nature speaks to man because God is behind Nature, and the human soul responds to God. Holy Scripture often illuminates, or echoes, or falls in with, God's voice in Nature, for Holy Scripture, too, is the Word of God. The

prophet, with his mystical imagery, touches this chord, though his words are of far further reach and meaning.

(1) *This* evening of evenings we think, rest, and pause. The pause in music prepares for and gives force to the strain which is coming. The pause in work gathers up the Past and foretells and strengthens for the Future. The pause in life means often a chapter closed, and then the turning of the leaf for a new, a more solemn departure. This evening Christ seems to pause before the splendid victory is proclaimed.

(2) It reminds us how, slowly, gradually, surely, things *gather up* to their consequence and head—each little act joins on to each in life. All seem commonplace. Then comes some great shock, some great struggle ; then the quiet, the *gathering up*, before the display of necessary consequence.

(3) Then the “evening time” brings light. The clouds are lifting. All round the horizon is a belt of tender colour, appearing from behind what had been a canopy of stone. The hours go on ; the light is spreading ; there is the glimmer of the Dawn.

In Christ, we must welcome even the sad pauses in life. Some great change has come. It means something. In our lives, the more they are in union with Him, in the gathering up of the parts—perhaps happy, active, bright—perhaps filled with sorrow—there is something great meant by God. We wait and pray and look how best to follow.

(2) We must *look up*, even with the heart brimful of tears : we must *look up*, and bring together,

stronger than before, all our forces of trust and prayer. Night clouds of work, of care, of sorrow, have been over us, and we have *felt God*. Better so ; better than if always watching in sickly sunshine the great things had been forgotten. God has meant something glorious for us :

“ Beautiful things made new
For the delight of the sky children.”

We must look up. Faith, Hope, Love in Christ, are still conquerors. There is the glimmer of the Dawn.

Meditation.

THY hands have hung down, O my soul ! Thou must have had, must have, some struggle, darkness. Only hate sin ; love Christ ; trust God ; wait. Be patient ; be faithful. Tenderness of spirit and peace will come. “ At evening time there shall be light.”

*Night of struggle, storm, and sorrow,
Stay'st thou to disturb, affright ?
Evening time says “ Comes the morrow,”
Evening time brings light, sweet light.*

Prayer.

O GOD and loving Father, who dost not willingly afflict, strengthen us in struggle, sustain us in sorrow—in these, our times, give us light : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Easter Day.

Morning.

The Victory of Life,

TEXT.—“ *It was not possible that He should be holden of Death.*”

—ACTS ii. 24.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who through Thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: We humbly beseech Thee that, as by Thy special grace preventing us, Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

EASTER DAY is the Queen of Festivals. On the fact which that day commemorates rest the Hopes of the World. As St. Paul said, “If Christ be not risen our preaching is vain, and your faith also is vain.” This is so. The fact that Christ rose is proved by evidence stronger than any fact in history, and on that fact rests our intelligent belief in the

truths of Christianity. Christ is the Son of God. He is Perfect Man. He has revealed the Father. He has proclaimed the truth. He has founded His Church to last for ever, to be the home of souls, and the witness and teacher of Supernatural Revelation. Why—speaking of the reasonable evidence, which must be enough to satisfy an intelligent mind—are His words and deeds of infallible and unchanging power? The answer is, “Because He has proved His authority by rising from the dead.”

More than that. On this great morning we remember what this further means.

Life is the most marvellous thing in this world. What life *is*, who can say? We see it by its effects, in Nature, in our own bodies, in our own minds. Movement and growth witness to Life. All men desire it. Without it there is nothing. Man can banish it, by killing, from this or that subject of it; man can transmit it to his kind. Make it, he cannot, nor re-make it, when gone. It is the greatest thing. Face to face with it across the world strides its enemy—Death. Death has seemed to conquer. We are all subject to it still. Certainly we must die. All mankind have felt this. This dark shadow has been across every path.

Easter Day comes. It points to the risen Jesus. It assures us of the victory of Life.

After all Life, not Death, is to be finally victorious. The Spirit who came and taught the Apostle poured His light on those who had attended our Lord in His earthly course. Now they understood many things in His sayings, and in the ancient Scriptures,

which were dark before ; one thing we know : He was the Lord of Life, and His resurrection was strictly a necessity. He could not be “ holden of death.”

We who are baptized into Jesus Christ are one with Him. What He possesses we share. He, by the facts we commemorate, now possesses, nay, He *is*, life in the highest sense. We share the Day of Resurrection with Him.

(1) We must rejoice. Death is unnatural, cruel. It may punish us, it cannot forcibly hold.

(2) We must rise with Him in mind and thought, and as He died for us so we must “ seek the things which are above ” and live with Him and for Him.

Man has risen from the dead. Death can have no final rule over our race.

Meditation.

REJOICE, O my soul ! Thou hast been cast down by the sorrows and dark things of this world. Thy Lord has risen. His presence by grace, in the Sacraments, is given to thee. Thou shalt rise. Rise now in thought and heart and hope, where He is—the living one who was dead and is alive for evermore. Have hope. Take courage. Have joy.

Hail ! Living Jesus ! Pain hath wrought Perfection.

*Hail ! Once I breathed my prayer with trembling
breath,*

*Hoped, feared, believed—this Morn of Resurrection
Know I, Eternal Life hath conquered Death.*

Prayer.

RAISE our hearts, O Lord, to joy and praise. Teach us to rise in heart and life. Give us thankful souls, ever ready to live for, die for, Him who died and rose for us—Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord. Amen.

Ebening.

The Lasting Love.

TEXT.—“*Christ also hath loved us.*”—EPHES. v. 2.
 “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*”
 —HEB. xiii. 8.

Collect.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who through Thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: We humbly beseech Thee that, as by Thy special grace preventing us, Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Reading.

EASTER DAY is a day of joy and praise. Easter Day brings to us a sense of satisfied longings.

Have we solid ground for hope? Is death the end? Can we be made what we ought to be? Is there living power in Prayer, in Sacraments, in the Church? Shall we live again? Shall we meet again with those we love after the sad partings of the grave? Has love been a mere torture? A wild, wasting, baseless delusion? The answer comes: "Christ loved us." "He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." "Jesus Christ is risen from the dead."

(1) Who is risen? The compassionate, pitiful, merciful Saviour—the Good Shepherd; the Life of our Life; the Hope of our souls; the One who loved us and gave Himself for us; the Ideal and Model and Standard of Humanity; the great Example; the powerful High Priest; the all-prevailing Victim; the true Intercessor; the compassionate Friend; the great Elder Brother of us all; the Consoler of our afflictions; the Redeemer from Sin; the Sympathizer with the afflicted—He who has, and is, lasting Love is risen from the dead.

We tremble lest there should be a change in Him. No. He is the same.

Love has conquered. Easter commemorates the victory of Love.

(2) We are with Him, in Him.

What is the noblest thing in life?—Love.

Whence come dear friends and happy homes, and the sweetest objects of our affections?—From God. Life has been sunlight because of these. Listen to the true parent's cry:—

“ Beat upon mine, little heart,
Beat ! beat !
Beat upon mine, you are all my own,
From your dear, deep eyes to your feet,
You are mine, all mine,
My sweet, my own little sweet.”

Then comes deepening, increasing Love. Then parting and torture. Then the parting of the gravé. Love has ended. Love was folly. Life is woe. Turn and think of the assured glory of Easter Day !

It is the victory of Love.

True love in Christ will never die ; shaded by Death, with pangs of parting, it will live again. Death and Partings : these may pain and hurt and hinder—they cannot last. Love tries, Love conquers. Love is eternal. Christ is risen !

O victory of Love ! How glorious ! how blessed ! Sing and rejoice ! Rouse thee, sad heart, look on ! Sweeter than the breaking of the glorious morning, sweeter than the opening of spring flowers, and the notes of singing birds, and the whispers of the freshening breeze, is the Love of God in Jesus Christ : ennobling, purifying, exalting, sustaining all human life and human love—for Love is eternal, Love is victorious. Christ is risen !

Meditation.

I MUST bear in the power of the Risen One, and look up and look on. Turn, O my soul ! and live the higher life, “ looking unto Jesus,” looking for the Resurrection of the Dead.

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Hail! Living Jesus! Pain hath wrought Perfection.

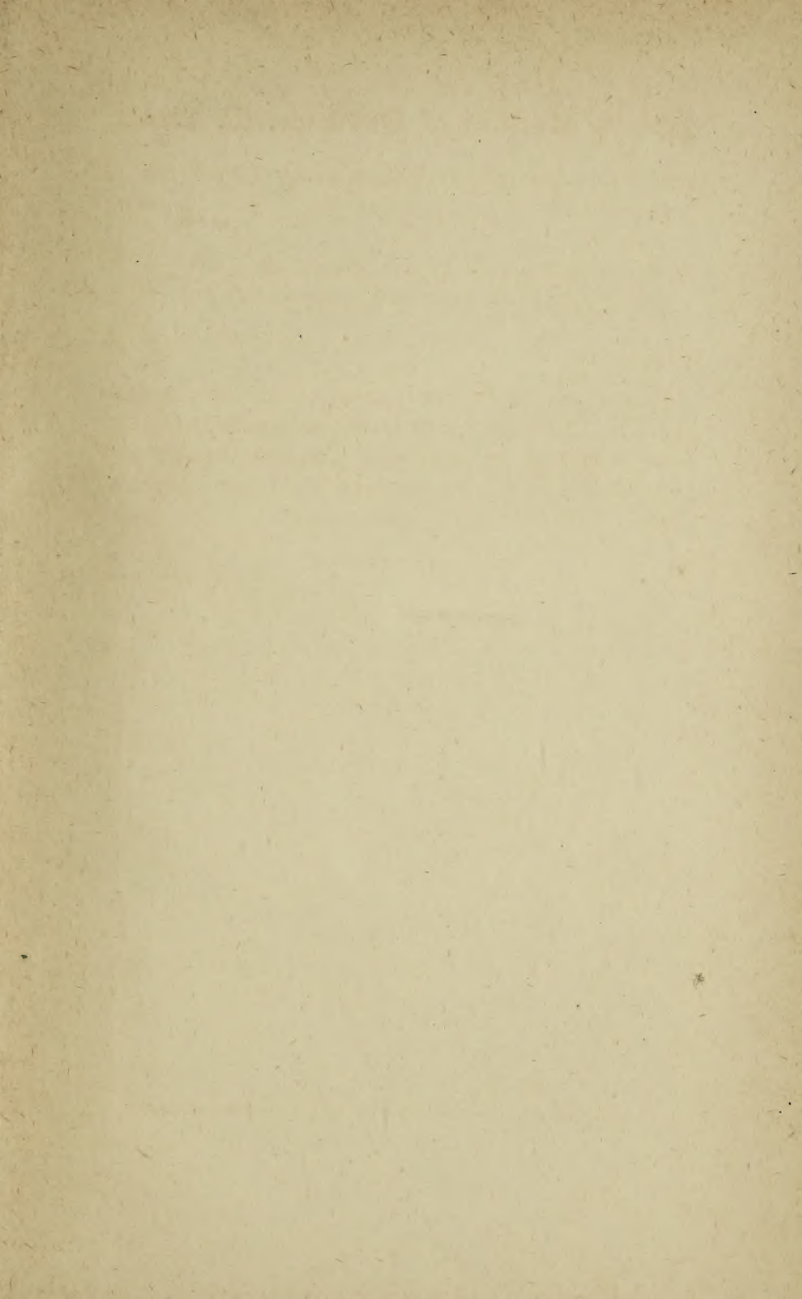
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KNOW I, Eternal Love hath conquered Death.

Prayer.

GRANT to me, O Lord, grant to us all, grace to rise with Christ, and with Him continually dwell, ever here and there, in fulness of joy and thankfulness beyond the grave : for the sake of the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





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